



dead bedroom

**A GUIDE TO
REVIVING
INTIMACY
IN MARRIAGE**

BY JOHN DAUM

PREFACE:

WHAT AM I READING?

What can I expect from this book?

Lots of straightforward talk about sex in a way you can apply it to your unique relationship.

How is this different than the millions of other books about sex?

We're not going to approach sex as just one part of your relationship. We're operating under the assumption that sex affects your whole relationship and your whole relationship affects sex. **[Read that last sentence again.]** That's quite a bit different than your typical "7 Ways To Make Your Sex Life Sizzle."

When you're married, there isn't your sex life, financial life, your social life. **There's just life.** Most books and articles about sex separate sex from the rest of your marriage. We realize that sex doesn't happen in a vacuum. Sex happens in your marriage relationship. This book is more of a **maritally-holistic approach to sex.**

Why should I trust this? What's your angle?

Great questions! Because this is based on the latest and best research. Research made *understandable*. Plus, someone who is just like you wrote it – someone who's trying to have a healthy sex life in a healthy marriage. The only "angle" is to keep it real.

Bottom line: Is this going to help my sex life? (And my marriage, because they both go together.)

Nobody has time to waste, so, absolutely.

Anything else I need to know?

We're keeping this practical. You'll find conversation starters and exercises for you as a couple. Expect some unique angles on sex and some fun facts. **Oh, and have a journal handy or a note on your phone to truly personalize this book.**

That it? Can I get to reading now?

Two quick things: (1.) Be honest. (With yourself and with your spouse.) And (2.) Have fun. Sex and marriage are important enough to justify honesty, transparency, and authenticity. But as serious as all that may sound, sex and marriage should be seriously fun. Please don't forget to have fun. **Even if you're struggling through some things, enjoy the journey. Now, let's go!**

sex affects your whole relationship and your whole relationship affects sex.

INTRODUCTION

Love never dies a natural death. It dies because we don't know how to replenish its source. It dies of blindness and errors, and betrayals. It dies of illness and wounds; it dies of weariness, of witherings, of tarnishings.

ANAIS NIN

Sex: the thing that takes up the least amount of time and causes the most amount of trouble.

JOHN BARRYMORE

There's a saying: The corruption of the best is the worst of all. To unpack that a bit, we might say: When the **awesome things** in our life get screwed up, they become **awful things**.

Could anything be more accurate about sex? Sex is one of the most magnificent things in life. But when sex becomes complicated and convoluted, expected and deflected, when sex becomes tedious and monotonous, any magic disappears. *Sex turns into a source of dread, resentment, and bitterness.*

In the past few years, the term **Dead Bedroom** has become a common way to symbolize a bedroom where a couple experiences considerable ongoing sexual problems. **Dead Bedroom** is not a clinical term. It generally refers to significant changes in a couple's typical sex life. Sexual frequency may become reduced or stopped altogether. Even infrequent sex may become much less satisfying or pleasurable for one or both spouses.

Keep In Mind: There are many common temporary fluctuations in any couple's sex life. Circumstances like pregnancy, childbirth, nursing, and things like illness or injury often directly impact sex. These kinds of circumstances on their own don't create a true **Dead Bedroom**. A bedroom has "died" due to emotional or relational intimacy problems becoming an obstacle to a couple's physical intimacy. In other words, if your bedroom has died, it needs to be revived in every room of your house. **We're going to think outside the bedroom.**

Know you aren't alone. Sex is an issue in most marriages; it's just that nobody talks about it. What if somebody cared enough to not only talk with you but walk with you through it all? What if they were qualified to cut through the Cosmo-esque sex advice nonsense?

Let's begin our talk here. **Sex is one of the simplest, yet most difficult things in marriage.** It's generally simple in the sense that even the birds and bees are doing it just fine. They aren't reading "How To Keep Your Hive Humming" or "5 Ways To Make A Real Love Nest."

Specifically, sex can be complicated in marriage because human sexuality is more than just biological. Sex is a bunch of other stuff too.

With human sexuality, we have strong emotions and complex relationship dynamics to navigate. (The birds and the bees have it easy.) We're often dealing with the psychological weight of past traumas. A spouse who doesn't feel safe emotionally but still expects sexual vulnerability. Maybe a not-so-functional marriage where there is pressure for frequent functional sex. Sometimes our health issues keep undermining what's in our heart. **All of this stuff is workable.** You just need a good-natured guide.

So, you've got some questions about your sex life. Everybody does. Take a wild guess where those questions usually get asked – usually, *the internet*. We can ask our questions anonymously, but there is so much conflicting information, fads, misinformation, and opinions with no research backing them up online. *We can do better than that. Your sex life and your marriage deserve better than that.*

QUESTIONABLE SEX

We've all got a lot of questions about sex. The wording might vary a bit, but here's what most married people want to know right out of the gate:

Is there a certain amount of sex we should be having?

Are men and women just wired differently when it comes to sex?

One of us is more interested in sex than the other. What now?

Since having kids, sex has kinda disappeared. What do we do?

My spouse wants us to try _____. How do I say I'm not into that?

Those questions top the lists of frequently asked questions about sex, according to marriage therapists and counselors. Maybe some of these are your questions. Maybe you have different ones. All our questions represent the simple ways sex gets complicated and complicates marriage and how our marriage complicates sex.

On Google, the top complaint about marriage is not having sex. Searches for “sexless marriage” are three and a half times more common than “unhappy marriage” and eight times more common than “loveless marriage.” There are 16 times more complaints about a spouse not wanting sex than about a married partner not being willing to talk.

Do you see it? The key is right there. The answers to your questions about the sexual problems in your marriage are *in the questions themselves*. Those questions reveal our priorities and focus. **[SEARCH]** is like truth serum. Do we know all there is to know about happiness, love, and communication? Are we better at those things than sex? Or do we just think we are?

What if we stopped looking for answers about sex and started looking at our questions?

When it comes to our questions and concerns about sex and marriage, we often are not open and honest with our spouses. (*We struggle to be honest with ourselves.*) But, wow, we are transparent with that little white rectangle on our screen labeled, “SEARCH.”

*we might not be having
sex, but sex has us.
(and our marriage.)*

Is it possible that we're over three times more preoccupied with *sexual issues* than *happiness* in our marriages? Over eight times more focused on *sex* than *love*? Some 16 times more concerned with *sex* than *talking*? Sit with those questions for a moment. Don't focus on the numbers. **Absorb the principle.**

In our thinking, at least, sex appears to be more disruptive to our marriage than a lack of happiness, love, and communication. But this can't be possible because if our relationship were so full of happiness, love, and communication, we would be too busy having sex to be on Google searching for answers to fix our sex lives. Right?

But we aren't having sex. Sex has us. Sex has us asking the wrong questions and working with the wrong answers or no answers at all. No wonder our sex lives (and marriages) are dying. What if we flipped the script? What if we asked more questions about communication, love, and happiness? How would that change our marriages? *Is it possible the sex would follow?*

Sex isn't an end in itself. When you make it one, sex has a way of ending itself. According to research by Wake Forest University psychologists, marriage does more to promote a satisfying life than money, sex, or even children. **A healthy, happy marriage is an end in and of itself. And the beginning of better sex.**



If you're focusing on your relationship in the bedroom, your relationship in all rooms of your house will suffer.

Think outside the bedroom.

When you focus on improving your marriage in all the other rooms in your home, your bedroom will be banging.

But this isn't one of those: **17 Incredible Secrets To Crazy Body-Melting Mega Ultra Awesome Sex!** kind of things. Those types of articles imply that our sexual struggles are *technical* when they're actually *relational*. Sure, Secret #7 might be a fun, new technique, but if you don't feel safe communicating with your spouse, what good is it?

What are your questions or concerns about sex in your marriage? Try to look at your questions instead of trying to answer them. What do your questions reveal? Are they distorting your view of yourself, your spouse, and your marriage? **Now, what are your questions about happiness, communication, and love in your marriage?**



what could happen
in your sex life if you
**started thinking outside
the bedroom?**

HOW TO THINK OUTSIDE THE BEDROOM

Sex can make us frustrated, anxious, and bitter. Sex can get us thinking a little too much about that co-worker or friend. Sex can move us toward walking out the door.

The Bottom Line: *Sex has us focusing on sex.*

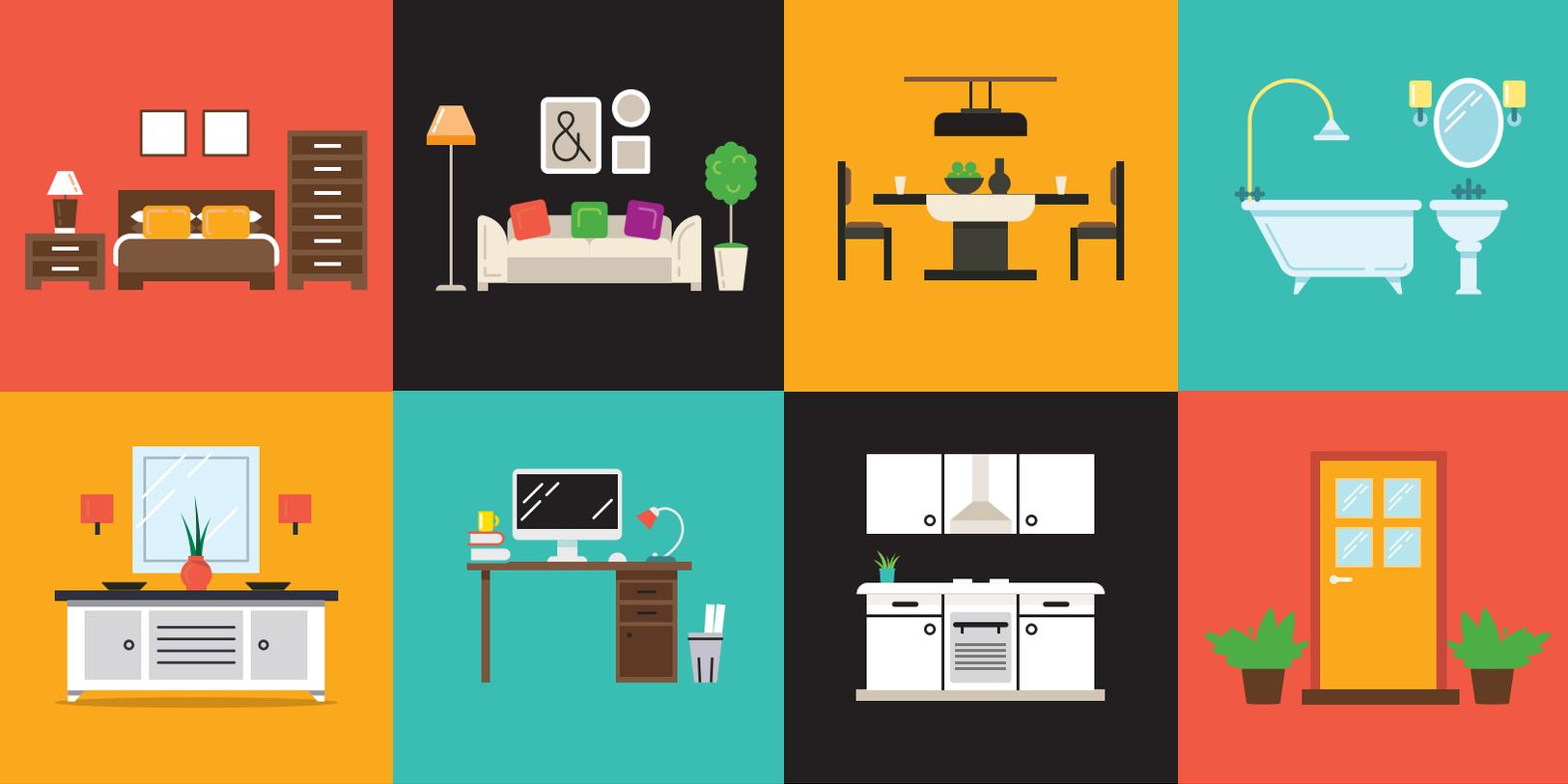
For many people, if you were to ask them about their marriage's health, their minds would immediately go to the bedroom. We need to begin by **not** equating those two things.

This is a large part of the problem. It's not that sex isn't important – it *absolutely is*. Research shows again and again that marital satisfaction correlates with sexual satisfaction. Facts are facts. Couples who report having more sex also report higher levels of happiness with their marriage. **But what is the relationship between the two?** Will having aerobicized sex 10 times a day unring the bell of an emotional affair? Relieve bitterness toward a lazy, unhelpful spouse? Facilitate forgiveness over broken trust? Nope. **So, it can't just be a matter of having more frequent sex.**

Sex seems to be the one thing you can't improve by focusing on it. In fact, fixating on sex makes it harder to fix. Focusing on relational intimacy outside the bedroom is the best fix for sexual intimacy inside the bedroom.

Sex isn't the problem.
The problem is the problem.

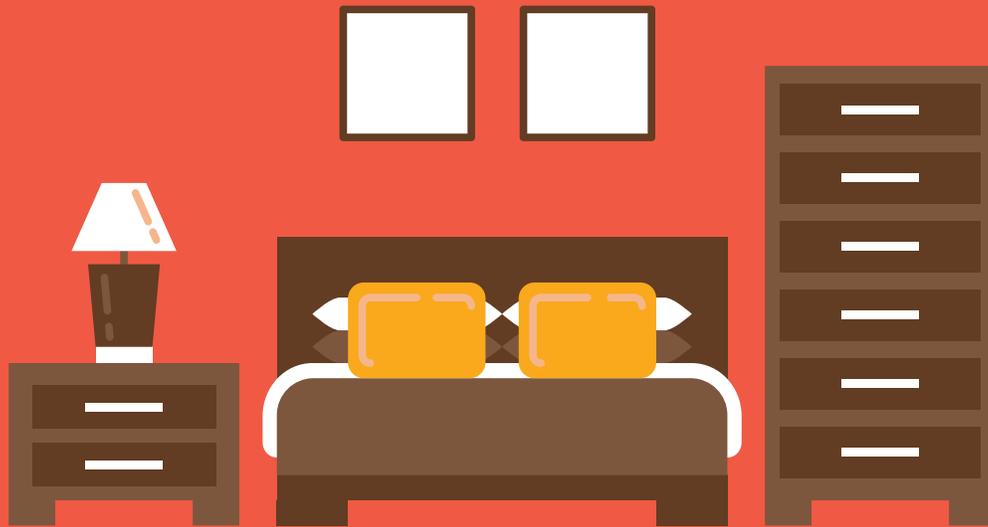
Sex is a symptom.
Sex can't be the solution.



SEX IN EVERY ROOM OF YOUR HOUSE

We might experience our sexual problems in the bedroom, but they usually begin with our relationship in the rest of the house. Sexual struggles usually begin with marital struggles. (Then sexual struggles create marital struggles. Great, right?) This is why a relationally holistic approach offers real, long-lasting solutions. We'll start briefly in the bedroom and then take a relationship intimacy tour through the rest of your house. Then we'll come back to the bedroom and spend more time there.

In each room in your home, we'll look at how that room contributes to your sex life by examining how that room contributes to a healthy relationship. **What questions should we be asking in each room? What questions about communication, happiness, and love should we ask, say, in the kitchen or dining room, that would translate to better answers in the bedroom?**



the bedroom

Let's hit a couple of things head-on. There's a good chance *one of you* is skeptical about fixing bedroom problems by *thinking outside the bedroom*. One of you is sitting on the bed with your arms crossed, adamant the situation is *right here*. It's also entirely possible that one of you has your hand on the doorknob and can't wait to go to the other rooms of your house. For you, the problem is *everywhere but here*. **This disconnect is common to sexual complaints and difficulties.**

Stereotypes & Misconceptions... Ugh.

We are going to commit ourselves to **rely on research and defer to data**. Let's agree not to examine husbands in general. Let's not focus on wives in general. *Generalizations are generally about as inaccurate as they are accurate – generally.* Instead, we need to be laser-focused and specific. **Let's focus on you, your spouse, and your marriage.**

Flip side! There is often a tiny little morsel of truth to a common misconception. Without it, the misconception wouldn't be so common. **The fact is, you and your spouse are probably wired differently when it comes to sex.** But it isn't about *husbands in general*, and it isn't about *wives in general*. This kind of thinking just creates more problems. For starters, neither spouse is married to someone *in general*. **You are married to someone in particular.**

Don't project assumptions onto your spouse sexually. Learn their sexual specifics.

Being wired differently doesn't mean doom. It just means *different*. You and your spouse are different in many other ways that aren't *Sex-Killers* or *Marriage-Enders*. The bedroom shouldn't be any different. Many of our sex problems are really libido differences. One of you probably has a higher libido or sex drive than the other. It's that simple. If you both had equally high libidos, you wouldn't be reading this. *You'd be having sex.*

If you both had equally low libidos or sex drives, you wouldn't be reading this either. You would be perfectly content to enjoy each other's company while binge-watching Netflix. Completely equal libidos in marriage exist like Bigfoot or Sasquatch. You can't *completely rule out* their existence, but you'll probably never see one.

you both have varying levels of varying sexual interest at various times that **invariably vary!**



Your sex drives are probably different.

Totally common. You aren't unique or special. It doesn't matter whose libido is higher and whose is lower. What matters is how you navigate the distance between your libidos. No pointing fingers or placing blame.

Accept this and commit to:

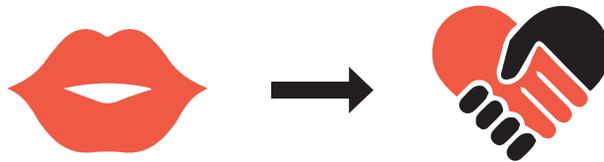
- ✓ Communicating & Understanding
- ✓ Navigating & Nurturing Relational Intimacy
- ✓ Compromising & Concentrating On Your Spouse's Needs

You. Have. Different. Libidos. This insight should generate more of a shrug than a side-eye. **Differing libidos is only a problem if you make it one.** Neither spouse is wrong. This is a big lesson for couples to learn.

Let's take this even further. If there is static in your relationship, one of you becomes *less interested in sex*. There's no need to feel an ounce of guilt over this. It's normal. In contrast, one of you might immediately be down for sex even if it was suddenly offered in the middle of a raging fight - no need to feel any guilt over this, either.



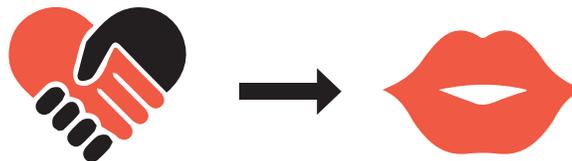
Ready for a Lightbulb Moment?



**ONE OF YOU PROBABLY NEEDS TO
HAVE **SEX** TO FEEL **CONNECTED****

Things need to be going well in the bedroom first for things to go well in the other rooms in your house.

VS



**ONE OF YOU PROBABLY NEEDS TO
FEEL **CONNECTED** TO HAVE **SEX****

Things need to be going well in the other rooms in your house first for things to go well in the bedroom.

Read that again.

Opposites Attract or Opposites Attack?

Before we leave the bedroom to explore the rest of your house, let's set everyone's mind at ease. All of the "one of you this... one of you that" stuff is healthy, standard, and to be expected. (And accepted.)

You need to look at your questions about sex to see what you can learn. You also need to look at who you are asking. There's a lot to learn from both. Some people don't ask anyone. Some people ask their close friends. As we've seen, many people ask Google. **But have you asked your spouse?** *Are you working through your questions together as a couple?* (Venting about your spouse in the comment section of some blog doesn't count!)

Comically or tragically, one of the most asked questions on Google is, "How long is my penis?" I know, right? Why would anyone turn to Google to answer that question? If you want to know, hey, ask a ruler! Before you snicker too much, why do we expect Google to answer a question like, "How much sex should we be having?" How should Google know? **If you want to know, talk to your spouse.**

The elephant in the room is that many couples have a difficult time talking about sex. Let's work on that right now. BOOM. **Sit somewhere comfy with your spouse and read the following out loud:**

There are no right or wrong answers. We are about to be honest about our current interest levels in sex on a scale of 1 to 5. One is low. Five is high. [Take a second to make sure both of you are ready.] On the count of three, we are going to say our numbers out loud. One, two, three...

Anyone who is observant, who discovers the person they have always dreamed of, knows that sexual energy comes into play before sex even takes place. The greatest pleasure isn't sex, but the passion with which it is practiced. When the passion is intense, then sex joins in to complete the dance, but it is never the principal aim.

PAULO COELHO

Okay. Judgment-Free Zone. You and your spouse *probably didn't say the same number*. It's okay. These are just numbers. In fact, the goal will never be to have the same number. Nope. **The goal is always to split the difference. Do the math.** The difference is what you both need to nurture and navigate. Different is just different, but you both need to be willing to meet halfway. That's teamwork. That's marriage work. Now that we have that out in the open. *Talk about it.*

Time to leave the bedroom. Time to explore the rest of your house. One of you is probably excited; one of you, not so much. One of you needs to commit to exploring the rest of the house in good faith; one of you needs to commit to coming back to the bedroom when we're done. Let's see how what happens in the rest of the rooms in your house impacts the bedroom.

**Let's start in the heart of your home:
the kitchen.**





the kitchen

Everything happens in the kitchen. Life happens in the kitchen.

ANDREW ZIMMERN

Cooking is one of the strongest ceremonies in life.

LAURA ESQUIVEL

No woman gets an orgasm from shining the kitchen floor.

BETTY FRIEDAN

For me, cooking is an extension of love.

HEDDA STERNE

room facts



WOMEN COOK
78%
OF DINNERS
AND MAKE
93%
OF FOOD
PURCHASES



WOMEN
SPEND
3X
AS MANY
HOURS
IN THE KITCHEN
AS MEN

THE ESTIMATED
VALUE
OF "TYPICAL"
HOUSEHOLD
TASKS
\$195,599



PER YEAR
(\$94/HOUR)



57.5% OF COUPLES
HAVE HAD
SEX IN THE KITCHEN



FOR COUPLES
WITHOUT KIDS
THE KITCHEN RANKS
2ND FOR **SEX**
OUTSIDE THE BEDROOM

the top 5 ways the kitchen hurts the bedroom

1

exhaustion
and
busyness

2

resentment
from
unequal
division of
labor

3

lack of
teamwork
and
cooperation

4

missed
opportunities
for
communication

5

poor nutrition
and **poor health**
plays a role in
poor sexual
performance

The Kitchen: A Dangerous Place For Your Sex Life

Sharp objects, boiling water, open flames, and hot surfaces can make your kitchen a dangerous place to have sex. Still, that danger doesn't stop 57% of couples, apparently. The kitchen poses a more dangerous threat to your sex life beyond knives and flames, though. Survey after survey, study after study, and poll after poll describes the same top two sex-killers. You can easily find both of them in your kitchen:

1. Physical fatigue and stress

2. Emotional disconnection or relational drift

If sex itself is two bodies joining together, the kitchen is often where those two bodies become separated - physically and relationally. All too frequently, one spouse is busy in the kitchen, and the other is... somewhere... doing *something*. (Probably relaxing.) One spouse is harried, hurriedly preparing the meal, setting the table for dining, and cleaning it all up afterward. The other spouse? *Wait, there's another spouse that could be helping?* **Yesssss!**

The kitchen represents a large workload. Add in the clothes in the laundry room, cleaning the bathrooms, and chores all over the household. Plus, keeping up with pets. Taking care of a baby or toddler. Helping kids with homework and school projects. Orchestrating baths and bedtime. Factor in the reality that this individual probably works outside the home or works from home. Now, multiply this scenario by "day after day." Total. Up. All. This. Work. (*And what if the sum never gets divided by two?*)

If this is the situation, or anything even remotely close to this, stress and physical exhaustion are guaranteed. Emotions like bitterness, resentment, and contempt are guaranteed. Sex? Definitely not guaranteed. (Even if sex occasionally happens, don't be surprised when it's dutifully treated like **another chore** on the list of things to be checked off. How *romantic*.)

“Chores are a small yet vital way that couples show care for one another, their home, and their relationship. If couples are not on the same page about these tasks, one partner will likely do the brunt of the chores and feel resentful or feel as though their partner doesn’t care about them,” explains marriage and family therapist Justine Mastin.

Once again, open, honest communication is the key.

HOW TO TALK ABOUT HOUSEHOLD RESPONSIBILITIES

- Make a list of everything that needs to be done – daily, weekly, monthly.*
- Talk about your household division of labor when you’re both calm.*
- Focus on how both of you feel and what your individual needs are.*
- Use “I statements.” Organize, don’t criticize. Listen to your spouse.*
- Don’t assume your spouse “should just know.” Or that they should do it your way.*
- Talk about the chores you enjoy and the ones you really hate doing.*
- Play to your strengths, not stereotypes.*
- What tasks can you do together? Bonding time!*
- Plan, but remain flexible. Make this an ongoing conversation.*

A study from the University of Alberta showed that couples had higher sexual frequency and higher sexual satisfaction when men helped around the house. The researchers believe that the correlation has to do with the women in the marriage feeling more respected. (We can take the logical liberty of adding, “*And also feeling less stressed out and exhausted.*”)

Listen. When you got married, you became a team. If you’re expecting (or hoping for) some teamwork in the bedroom, teamwork in the other rooms of your house is critical. **Think outside the bedroom.** Foster a positive team mindset in all the rooms of your home.

research shows that couples have more and better sex when men helped around the house

the top 5 ways the kitchen helps the bedroom

1

an attitude
of **servicing**
your spouse

2

working
together to
accomplish
a goal

3

chores are
better together
(and can even
be fun!)

4

housework:
negotiation.
collaboration.
compromise.

5

expressing
thanks and
gratitude

sex TIP

Have sex outside the bedroom. Most couples have sex in the bedroom, mainly for many practical reasons. While understandable, this relegates sex to a routine, end-of-the-day activity when one or both of you might be exhausted. **Explore the rest of the house, different times of day, and each other.**

the questionable kitchen

What was the “division of labor” in both of our homes growing up?

Do we both feel comfortable asking for help when we need it? Asking for a break?

Is there laughter and dancing in our kitchen?
(Seriously.)



the bathroom

I wish I had thrown out the bathroom scale at age 16.

ANNE LAMOTT

Marriage is two people in love standing in the same bathroom.

AUSTIN KLEON

The kitchen. The bathroom. The yin and yang of the household.

DAVID C. HOLLEY

room facts

2 MONTHS
OF YOUR LIFE ARE SPENT
BRUSHING
TEETH




THE AVERAGE
LENGTH OF A
SHOWER
8.2
MINUTES

TIME SPENT
GETTING
READY
IN THEIR LIFETIME



136
DAYS



46
DAYS



82.8% OF COUPLES
HAVE HAD
SEX
IN THE BATHROOM



FOR COUPLES
WITH CHILDREN
THE BATHROOM RANKS
1ST FOR SEX
OUTSIDE THE BEDROOM

the top 5 ways the bathroom hurts the bedroom

1

health
and
medical
issues

2

poor
self-image
and
insecurity

3

hygiene
and
grooming

4

little to no
communication
about
health issues

5

lack of
affirmation
and support

How do you address the overall sexual health of your marriage?

You obviously care about the sexual health of your marriage. Maybe you've noticed changes in your sex life, and you're wondering if you should be concerned. What is normal and healthy when it comes to sex anyway? Sex may be a part of your marriage that makes you or your spouse uncomfortable – *emotionally or physically*. Maybe sex generates frustration or conflict in your marriage. **It's normal for spouses to struggle to get on the same page when it comes to sex.** Let's take advantage of the room most associated with privacy, medicine cabinets, (and, yes, bodily functions) to talk about *sexual health*.

Before sex dies in a marriage, it usually suffers a long, protracted illness. Let's talk about your physical health first. You know the drill. To see if you're physically healthy, your doctor would recommend a *comprehensive approach* that evaluates your overall health and wellness. Your doctor would invest some time to have a conversation with you about several key areas in your life, including:

- 1. Family history**
- 2. Personal background** (*including past problems or issues*)
- 3. Marital and family status**
- 4. Mental and emotional health**
- 5. Any significant environmental factors**
- 6. Nutrition, exercise, sleep, and personal hygiene habits**
- 7. Issues specifically related to being a man or woman**

Your sexual health is no different. In fact, look at the above list again with your sexual health in mind.

Let's go there... **your sexual health is affected by many vital areas in your life, including:**

Family history

Your parents may have been very open and sex-positive, or sex may have been treated like a taboo subject. Sex may have never been addressed at all in your family.

Personal background

Your personal background with sex may include multiple sexual partners or it may have started on your wedding night. Your sexual background may include pornography. It may include tons of experimenting or experiences of emotional or physical trauma.

Marital and family status

You and your marriage will go through a variety of sexual seasons. Sex will evolve over the years. Situations like pregnancy, childbirth, and nursing impact sexuality. Sex is different if there are no kids, toddlers, or teenagers in the house, or after the nest empties.

Mental and emotional health

Your mental and emotional health directly impacts your sex life – big time. Stress, anxiety, or depression affect your sexual health. Do you have a realistic self-image? What about memories that conjure feelings of guilt, shame, or regret?

Any significant environmental factors

Your environment could include things like influential friends with different views on marriage or sex. Your work environment: Intense deadlines and expectations. Shift-work. Travel demands. Situations in life as simple as a lack of available babysitters or as potentially complicated as in-laws living nearby. All of these things can impact your sex life in a variety of subtle and not-so-subtle ways.

Nutrition, exercise, sleep, and personal hygiene habits

You're a walking chemistry set. Vitamin or mineral deficiencies, hormonal changes, medications, health conditions, a sedentary lifestyle, poor sleep, or even personal hygiene all affect you sexually.

Issues specifically related to being a man or woman

Yes, there are some general ways that men and women differ in their sexual wiring but, often, not in the ways we assume. (Usually, the assumptions present more of a problem than the actual differences.) *Become a student of yourself sexually and your spouse.*

You and your spouse have your own individual sexual health, so talk through the above topics together. You obviously also have the sexual health of your marriage. How do those areas above impact your sexual relationship? As you go through different seasons of life, so does your sex life. Camp out here and have some conversations.



*don't make any assumptions.
instead, become a student of
yourself and your spouse...
ya know, sexually.*



INTO THE MEDICINE CABINET WE GO...

It's important to distinguish between low libido (the loss of sexual desire) and sexual dysfunction. Each can have physical and psychological causes but are entirely different in how they are treated.

Low Libido

Low libido is a decrease in sex drive that can lead to decreased sexual activity. You can treat it if you can identify the underlying causes. The reasons for the loss of sexual interest can be many, including:

- **Relationship Problems**
- **Stress & Depression**
- **Erectile Dysfunction**
- **Hormone Imbalances**
- **Genital Pain**
- **Chronic Illness**
- **Medications**
- **Insecurity**
- **Self-Consciousness About Your Body**

Sexual Dysfunction

Sexual dysfunction involves any problem during the sexual response cycle that prevents an individual or a couple from having a satisfying sexual experience. This can include issues with desire, arousal, orgasm, or pain.

Types of sexual dysfunction in men include erectile dysfunction, delayed ejaculation, and premature ejaculation. In women, types of sexual dysfunction can consist of inadequate lubrication during intercourse or the inability to relax the vaginal muscles to allow intercourse.

No matter what sexual difficulties you or your spouse may be facing, commit to approaching them together as a team.

Fewer than 50% of people who are having sexual problems seek help from their doctor. Create a supportive environment in your marriage. If your spouse is dealing with health or medical issues, your relationship should be a safe place to be transparent and vulnerable about your body and sex.

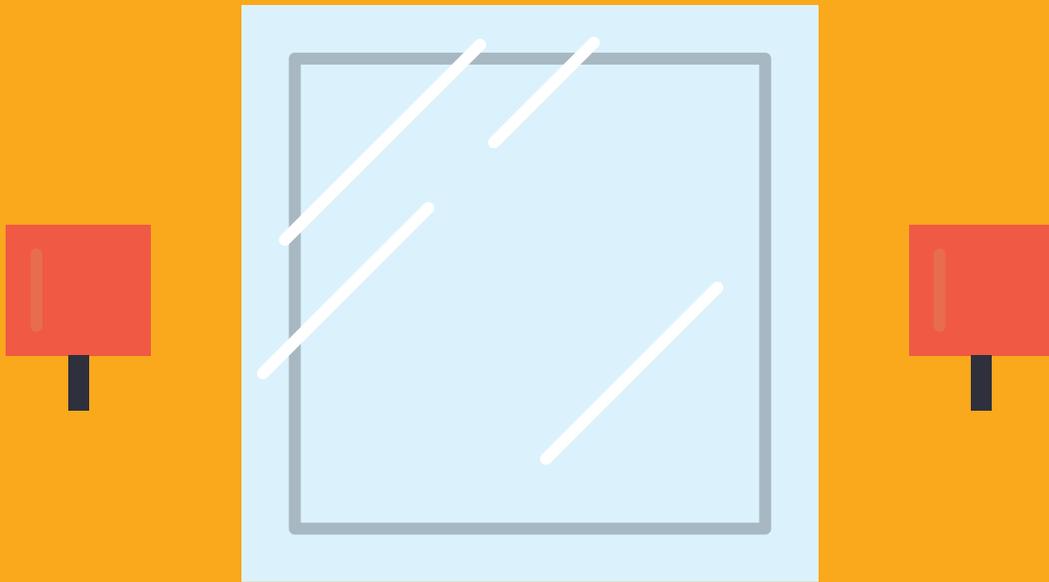
sex TIP

Try some shower foreplay. Slowly and sensually lather each other up. Great for kissing, massaging, exploring, and otherwise stimulating each others' bodies. Keep the stimulation going as you towel each other off. Where it leads is up to you.

the questionable bathroom

Have a conversation about sexual health issues.
Pro Tip: Seek to understand before seeking to be understood.

How will you support each other's needs & goals for sexual health?



the mirror

*Life is all about perception. Positive versus negative.
Whichever you choose will affect, and more than
likely reflect your outcomes.*

SONYA TECLAI

*Change the way you look at things,
and the things you look at change.*

WAYNE W. DYER

*To change ourselves effectively,
we first have to change our perceptions.*

STEPHEN R. COVEY

mirror facts

HOW OFTEN WE
LOOK AT OUR
REFLECTION
IN A DAY



8-16
TIMES

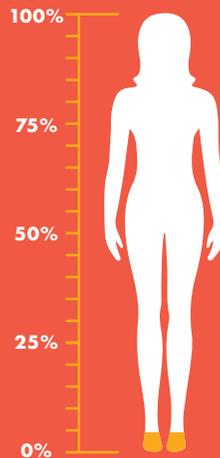


23
TIMES

TIME SPENT IN A DAY
REFLECTING
ON THEIR REFLECTION

WOMEN:
43
MINUTES

MEN:
56
MINUTES



<5%

OF THE FEMALE
POPULATION
CAN MEET THE
"MEDIA IDEAL"
FOR WEIGHT
AND SIZE

TOP MODELS
WEIGH
**30%
LESS**
THAN THE
AVERAGE
WOMAN



“

If I look super hot in the mirror
and super ugly in selfies,
what am I in real life?

[Real Question on Quora.com]

Friend or Foe?

Mirrors are obviously not a room in your house, but they're a fixture in many rooms. Our reflection makes an appearance on several shiny surfaces throughout the day. Interestingly enough, there is quite a bit of "mirror psychology" research being conducted. Who knew? (More on that to come.) Of all the dangers in your home to your sex life and your marriage, the mirror might represent a particularly insidious threat:

1. Not seeing yourself accurately and with acceptance.

2. Not seeing your spouse accurately and with acceptance.

"With acceptance" doesn't mean you don't have goals. You always want to have a positive growth mindset. **"With acceptance"** means you can see positive and not-so-positive qualities and still be comfortable in your own skin, with your own spouse, and in your own marriage. It means not comparing. It means rejecting perfectionism or fatalism when it comes to you and your body. And especially when it comes to sex. **Acknowledge reality and get busy being and enjoying your best selves.**

It's not what you look at that matters; it's what you see.

Henry David Thoreau

One interesting piece of mirror research revealed what people reported seeing when they looked in the mirror. **In general, men admired the parts of their bodies they were happy with, while women saw the details of their bodies they were self-conscious about or unhappy with.** Men typically "see" positive things in the mirror (65% arms, or the "gun show") and *overestimate* their attractiveness. Women often "see" a never-ending "body project" and tend to *underestimate* their attractiveness.

Remember, mirrors don't just reflect reality; they often deflect it. Mirrors can reinforce the "realities" we project.

Understand that we all suffer from what is termed "cognitive bias." Biases are things we subconsciously or unconsciously think that, in turn, affect how we perceive ourselves and the world around us. (READ: *You, Your Spouse, Your Marriage. Your Sex Life.*)

Our brains might be just fine and dandy, but **our minds are a hot mess of misperception, unreason, illogic, and straight-up delusion.** This is how a married couple who shares the same sex life can report *two completely different versions of their sex lives* – and neither of them may accurately represent reality. Many of our "sex problems" are rooted in "perception problems." (Read that last sentence as if it were in a bold, underlined, italicized, neon, flashing, 50-point font. Like this...)

**Many of our
"sex problems"
are rooted in
"perception
problems."**

The good news? You don't have to be a slave to your (mis)perceptions. Here's how to beat cognitive biases:

Make it a habit to tell yourself the truth. (Self-talk is powerful talk.)

Choose positivity and optimism.

Interrogate your perceptions, don't accept them at face value.

Train yourself to look at things from multiple perspectives.

Run your perceptions past your spouse with an open mind.

Have friends you can trust to tell you the truth.

everything in your life, every experience, every relationship is a mirror of the mental pattern that is going on inside of you.

Louise Hay

sex TIP

Have some “out-of-body” sex. (Basically where you can watch yourselves in a mirror.) View your bodies from a different angle. Steal some glances or study yourselves. Be a voyeur into your own sexual experience.

the questionable mirror

What do you see in the bathroom mirror?
What does your spouse see? Talk about it.

How are perceptions affecting your sex life?

Want to invent a useful word right now?
“Mispersexions.” These are sexual misperceptions of yourself, your spouse, and your sex life.

Can you please step out into the hall?

Looks like a good spot to review what we are doing and why we are doing it! We are trying to answer the questions:

**Why does sex die in marriage?
How do you revive it?**

Sex dies:

- ✗ When you become more preoccupied with sex than your spouse.
- ✗ When you don't prioritize your relationship over your sexual relationship.
- ✗ When you stop communicating. (Not just about sex.)
- ✗ When you have emotional, physical, or sexual health issues that you aren't facing as a team (and maybe with the help of a good doctor or counselor).
- ✗ When "misperceptions" about yourself, your spouse, your sex life, and your marriage go unchallenged and run roughshod over reality.

Remember the stats that launched our study?

Search...



On Google, the top complaint about marriage is not having sex. Searches for “sexless marriage” are three and a half times more common than “unhappy marriage” and eight times more common than “loveless marriage.” There are 16 times more complaints about a spouse not wanting sex than about a married partner not being willing to talk.

What if you focused more on loving your spouse, increasing their happiness, and developing healthier communication with them? Well, you’d have a stronger, deeper, more intimate marriage. *And the sex will follow.* (Even if you – especially if you – have some significant sexual issues to work through, you’ll be working through them together in the context of healthier marriage.)

We’ve tried to illustrate this important sexual position with the phrase:

Think outside the bedroom.

How do you relate to each other in the rest of your home? In what ways do you demonstrate affection in the kitchen or laundry room? Do you attack chores as a team so that no one person ends up burned out and bitter? How are you and your spouse’s emotional and physical health? Have you communicated about and committed to approaching any emotional or physical obstacles to a healthy sex life? Are you talking through any “mispersexions” as you both encounter them?



the living room

*Marriage, ultimately, is the practice
of becoming passionate friends.*

HARVILLE HENDRIX

*Dancing is a perpendicular expression
of a horizontal desire.*

GEORGE BERNARD SHAW

*Love must be fed and nurtured...
first and foremost, it demands time.*

DAVID MACE

room facts



8.4 YEARS
OF YOUR LIFE ARE SPENT
WATCHING
TV

3

YEARS
OF OUR
LIVES
ARE SPENT ON
SOCIAL
MEDIA



96%
OF COUPLES
HAVE HAD SEX
IN THEIR LIVING ROOM



FOR COUPLES
WITHOUT KIDS
THE LIVING ROOM RANKS
1ST **FOR SEX**
OUTSIDE THE BEDROOM

the top 5 ways the living room hurts the bedroom

1

*not
spending
time
together*

2

*not
having
fun
together*

3

*fading
friendship*

4

*in a
relationship
rut*

5

*no
affectionate
touching
(non-sexual)*

Are we even friends?

At the beginning of this book, we committed ourselves to keep our talk about sex and marriage real. Let's get real. Really real. Sexual vulnerability is difficult if you are unhappy with your spouse or with your marriage. You may not even feel the bond of friendship with your spouse anymore, so understandably, it would be a struggle to bond physically.

Understood. Being unhappy with your spouse (or knowing they are unhappy with you) is one of the worst feelings. Acknowledging that your friendship has faded is a harsh reality to face. This is your spouse. This is your marriage. *This is your life.* In a very real sense, sexual difficulties or infrequency are not your main concerns. Sexual problems are more of a symptom of deeper relationship issues. You may have reached a point where you are living separate lives under the same roof. This is physically and emotionally draining and debilitating. *But it's definitely not hopeless.*

Before we seek to address these issues in the living room, a few things need to be given their due. **These are critical truths you need to consider:**

It's possible that your marriage (and your sex life) can be better than you can even imagine. This isn't empty wishful thinking. Anyone you think has a "good" marriage has been through some "stuff." That's how their marriage grew.

There is absolutely nothing wrong with calling in the professionals. You actually do it all the time – vision problems: optometrist, dental issues: dentist, house on fire: fire department. Marriage on fire? Marriage counselor or therapist. Yes, just like that.

Being disconnected from your spouse puts you and your spouse in a serious, dangerous position. Disconnection puts you both at risk of cultivating connections with other people. Anyone is capable of this. You might think you're not that weak, but the dynamics in play are that strong.

SEMI-CONTROVERSIAL STATEMENT:

*it is not a lack of love,
but a lack of friendship
that makes unhappy
marriages.*

NON-CONTROVERSIAL STATEMENT:

*you married your spouse
because you enjoyed
spending time with them.
(among other reasons.)
but now you don't.*

These statements both directly affect your sex life. In fact, a diminished friendship or general unhappiness will suck the joy right out of your bedroom and your sex life. The friendship between you and your spouse may have faded over time. Maybe you aren't investing time in your friendship because of a hectic lifestyle and being busy. You could be taking each other for granted and lost that initial curiosity you had for each other.

It's also possible that your friendship may have taken some direct hits in the form of betrayal, disappointment, or hurt inflicted intentionally or unintentionally. In many marriages, one or both spouses just aren't happy anymore. This unhappiness may have crept in slowly over the years or appeared instantly. **Bottom line: You don't enjoy being with your spouse anymore.** Address these kinds of issues in *your living room*, and you'll see a difference in *your bedroom*.

What if your living room became a place of happiness, fun, and friendship? In fact, instead of just having a room for living (boring), what if you and your spouse made this your Marriage Room? In your Marriage Room, you do things that help you get to know each other better. You deepen your intimacy intellectually and emotionally. Check this out – in your Marriage Room, you have fun together and enjoy each other.

Imagine your marriage is a car. Yes, sometimes you have to get under the hood and make critical repairs. Yes, sometimes you have to do preventive maintenance. But don't forget what a car is for in the first place. Sometimes you have to get in and go for a ride! Your Marriage Room is a place for repairs, maintenance, and fun!

the top 5 ways the living room helps the bedroom

1

*intentional
time
spent
together*

2

*laughter
and
play*

3

*cultivates
friendship*

4

*space for
creativity and
trying new
things*

5

*non-sexual
touch
and
affection*

sex TIP

Why so sexually serious? Play a sex game! Not sure how? **Invent one.** You can purchase sex dice or create your own. Roll an odd number, remove an article of clothing. List what spicy things you both have to do for the even numbers. OR you can “sexify” almost ANY game you like to play. (Skin Rummy!) **Get creative and enjoy.**

the questionable living room

You can be together in your living room but not connecting. What would make your living room a true Marriage Room?

What did you enjoy about spending time together when you were dating or first married?

Enjoying each other doesn't always happen organically. What's your plan?

Does your marriage need a restart or reboot? Talk to your spouse about ending your first marriage and starting your second marriage... with them. Have a little ceremony and start fresh.



the dining room

We refuse to turn off our computers, turn off our phone, log off Facebook, and just sit in silence, because in those moments, we might actually have to face up to who we really are.

JEFFERSON BETHKE

It's the sense of what family is at the dinner table... I wish more people would do this and recall the joy of life.

PAUL PRUDHOMME

This is what a family is all about - one another, sitting around the table at night. And it's very, very important.

JACQUES PÉPIN

room facts

COUPLES SPEND
20-30 MINUTES
EATING DINNER TOGETHER



4.7
YEARS
OF OUR LIVES
ARE SPENT
EATING



38.9% OF COUPLES
HAVE HAD
SEX IN THE DINING ROOM



FOR COUPLES
WITHOUT KIDS
THE DINING ROOM RANKS
3RD FOR SEX
OUTSIDE THE BEDROOM

the top 5 ways the dining room hurts the bedroom

1

*infrequent
or poor
communication*

2

*lack of
quality time
together*

3

*technological
distractions*

4

*no planning
or
intentionality*

5

*busy,
hectic
lifestyles*

It's not-so secret anymore

We may not be having frequent, satisfying sex, but many people sure are spending lots of time talking about their sex lives on the internet. Anonymity allows people to vent, spew, confess, and deliver sad marriage eulogies like:



I don't know... Should I give up on us?

I have not gotten sex for four years.



I am in acceptance mode.

I've felt so rejected through the years.



I'm now "acting" in our marriage.

I've forgiven, but I'll never forget.



I am dying for your touch.

I'm trying to remain faithful without sex.



You'll notice many of these anonymous comments are actually posed to *their spouse*. Online, we *type* the words that we don't *speak* to our spouse. When it comes to sex, we'll share our thoughts with the world, *but rarely with our spouse*. **Gentle Reminder: Your spouse is an equal partner in your sexual relationship and marriage. Talk to them.**

One of the most frequently addressed areas in couples therapy is **communication skills**. Regardless of your age or how long you've been together, effective conversations with your spouse are connected with higher relationship and sexual satisfaction. A study from Brigham Young University and Colorado State University tracked the leisure activity and relationships of 318 married couples. They found that women cared more than men about spending time together. But they were clear that the time had to involve talking to each other.

You may be desperately searching for answers about your spouse, but are you searching for answers *with* your spouse?

Time to exercise your
communication

with your spouse

What do couples with healthy sex lives do differently? Communicate. They give plenty of positive feedback, say "Thank you," and express gratitude. They attack problems as a team and cultivate a relational environment of honesty, transparency, and respect.

Directions:

- 1. Read sections A-C on how to give each other feedback.*
- 2. On a piece of paper, work through Section D individually.*
- 3. Exchange papers and talk about it.*



how to give each other constructive feedback

A before you give feedback

- In general, always be giving plenty of positive feedback
- Be open to how you are part of any problem
- **Constructive feedback is:**
 - Specific
 - Sticking to the present. (No going back years!)
 - Showing how something makes you feel/affects/impacts you
 - Sounding like a request, not a demand
- **Separate the behavior from the person:**
 - ✗ Person: Stop being such a rude jerk!
 - ✓ Behavior: Please stop raising your voice & interrupting when I talk.
 - ✗ Person: You're such a selfish lover!
 - ✓ Behavior: Please put more time into foreplay.
 - ✗ Person: Stop being so lazy!
 - ✓ Behavior: I need more help around the house.
- **Leave yourself time to clarify your thoughts**
- **Do all these things in a context of mutual grace and respect**
- **Be sure to follow these do's & don'ts:**
 - ✓ Do: Have regular times for talking about your relationship
 - ✗ Do Not: Dive right into a conversation/confrontation when upset
 - ✓ Do: Sit with the questions & the answers
 - ✗ Do Not: Insult, put down, attempt to hurt your spouse

B while you give feedback

- Believe the best about your spouse
- Minimize distractions
- Take turns talking & listening
- Put what you hear into your own words
- Ask clarifying questions
- First, seek to understand – Then, seek to be understood
- Emotions escalating? Take a break.
- Don't feel like everything needs to be resolved

C after you give feedback

- Celebrate progress and positive growth
- Talk about concrete steps and actions to take
- Affirm your love for each other
- Plan when you will “check in” on your relationship next

D

now put it into practice

(Be gentle with each other. But keep it real.)

outside the bedroom

(The relationship stuff.)

One thing I'd like you to keep doing is...

One thing I'd like you to start
or stop doing is...

inside the bedroom

(The sex stuff.)

One thing I'd like you to keep doing is...

One thing I'd like you to start
or stop doing is...

the top 5 ways **the dining room helps the bedroom**

1

*time spent
together*

2

*time spent
together
talking*

3

*time spent
together
talking and
listening*

4

*time spent
together
talking and
listening to
each other*

5

*time spent
together
talking and
listening to
each other's
sexual needs*

the questionable **dining room**

Have a relationship “check-in” on a regular basis to improve communication. It doesn't have to be long and drawn out. It's just some time set aside each week to take turns sharing any relationship concerns and recognizing relationship growth and victories.

When approaching your spouse about sexual problems in the relationship, the worst place to do it is the bedroom, where you are both exposed and vulnerable. **Where is some neutral territory where you can be alone and undisturbed?**



the front door

The doors we open and close each day decide the lives we live.

FLORA WHITTEMORE

*A positive attitude opens the door to positive opportunities,
which leads to a positive life.*

JOEL BENJAMIN

*The door of the human heart can only
be opened from the inside.*

WILLIAM HOLMAN HUNT

You don't want to close the door on hope.

MERLE HAGGARD

door facts

YOU'LL OPEN
30K
DOORS
IN YOUR
LIFETIME



2.5
YEARS
OF YOUR LIFE
ARE SPENT
INSIDE
A CAR
(WITH CLOSED DOORS)

A HOUSE HAS
10-12
DOORS
(ON AVERAGE)



the top 5 ways the front door hurts the bedroom

1

one or
both spouses
are **home**
infrequently

2

disconnecting
or drifting
apart during
travel

3

distrust
or insecurity
when
apart

4

not remaining
within
relationship
boundaries

5

not
occasionally
getting away
together

The front door can affect your sex life in two major ways.

1

Doors are boundaries. They are either locked or unlocked, open or closed. You trust your doors to protect the people in your house, especially when you are vulnerable. If you don't trust your spouse, any kind of intimacy is undermined.

Trust is earned. If trust is betrayed, it naturally takes time to earn it back. One of the best ways to build trust is to set boundaries that protect your marriage and then honor those boundaries. This is an important, ongoing conversation. Just like a door is either open or closed, boundaries should be crystal clear. Just like you lock your doors, boundaries keep what is valuable safe and secure. Be sure to include boundaries regarding the opposite sex, electronic devices and social media, money, check-ins when apart, and anything else either of you needs to feel secure.

This isn't just about infidelity. *Mating in Captivity* author Esther Perel nailed it:

I have a lot of people who come to my office who think that they are virtuous people because they haven't cheated. They have just been neglectful, indifferent, contemptuous, asexual, demeaning, insulting, but they haven't cheated. But betrayal comes in many forms. Betrayal is a breach, the breaking, or violation of a presumptive contract, trust, or confidence.

In many marriages, one or both spouses aren't home enough, which obviously makes a satisfying sex life difficult.

One spouse is working long hours, is on shift work, or must travel in their occupation. The other spouse has to “hold down the fort” on their own – housework, bills, kids, homework, ball games, recitals, pets, and on and on. They are burned out. One spouse is geared up for sex, and one spouse is looking to unwind. Talk about how you both will navigate this. *Don't be afraid to schedule sex.*

You can stay connected and have romance even when you're miles apart. Think notes, texts, phone calls, FaceTime flirtation. Little gestures say, “I was thinking of you.” Get creative. Get a little adventurous. Nothing says, “You are on my mind!” quite like a thong in a briefcase. *You get the idea.*

sex TIP

Open the door to scheduled sex. Make a sex date a few days away. In the meantime, flirt, tease and let that sweet anticipation build.

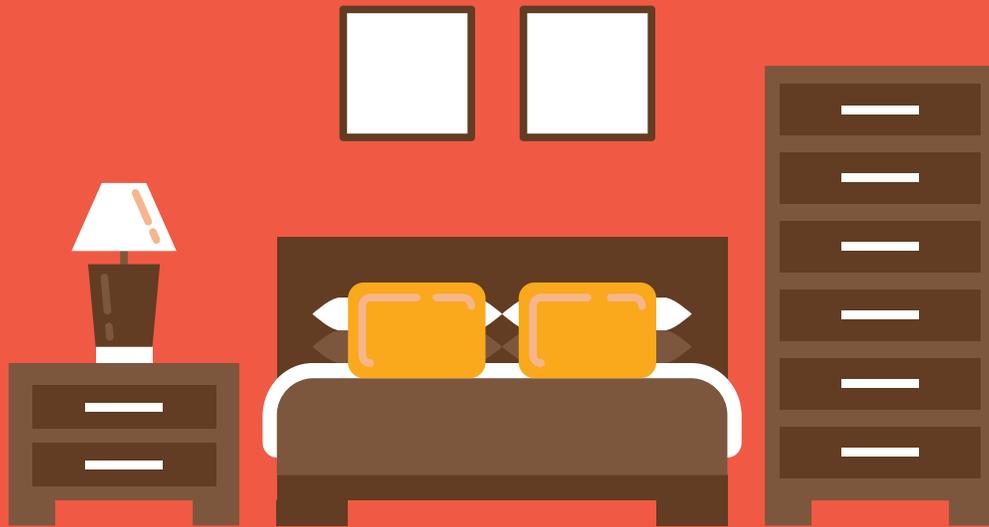
Anyone who is in love is making love the whole time, even when they're not. When two bodies meet, it is just the cup overflowing. They can stay together for hours, even days. They begin the dance one day and finish it the next, or – such is the pleasure they experience – they may never finish it.

PAULO COELHO

the questionable front door

Has trust been an issue in your marriage and in your sex life? Have you talked about appropriate boundaries to protect your relationship?

What are ways you can stay connected to your spouse even when you aren't together?



back to the bedroom

You think you've seen her naked because she took her clothes off? Tell me about her dreams. Tell me what breaks her heart. What is she passionate about, and what makes her cry? Tell me about her childhood. Better yet, tell me one story about her that you're not in. You've seen her skin, and you've touched her body. But you still know about as much about her as a book you once found, but never got around to opening.

UNKNOWN

we think we want sex,
but it's not always about sex.
it's intimacy we want.
to be touched. looked at.
admired. smiled at.
laugh with someone. feel safe.
feel like someone's really got you.
that's what we crave.

UNKNOWN

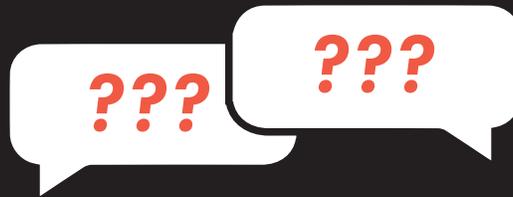
If this book has made anything clear, hopefully, it's that if you want to get busy in the bedroom, make sure you get busy working on your marriage in the rest of your house. The mantra has been, "Think outside the bedroom." Now, it's time to think *inside the bedroom*. Despite a firm belief that your sex life is dramatically affected by your relationship in the kitchen, dining room, living room, etc., there are definitely some "inside the bedroom" considerations. Here are two things to consider in your bedroom:

Get rid of the TV in your bedroom.

This might seem radical. Maybe you start with not turning on the television at bedtime for a week or two and see what happens. You and your spouse may find yourselves filling that time with conversations that strengthen your relationship. You might play games and rekindle your friendship. You might end up having sex.

Have an extreme bedroom makeover.

Ironing boards in the middle of your bedroom. Exercise equipment lying around. Piles of laundry. Not. Very. Erotic. Silva Neves, psychosexual and relationship therapist, says “If you want to keep the bedroom as an erotic place, declutter, make it a space that feels more adult. If you have children, have a policy of no walking in without knocking.”



And now, the answer to the #1 question couples have about sex...

how much sex should we be having? 🔍

By this point in the book, you already know the answer! Talk to your spouse about it. *THAT much sex.* Keep in mind all that high-low libido stuff. The goal is to meet in the middle. This sometimes means you might have sex when you don't totally feel like it. It also means that sometimes you might feel like having sex, but you don't. Marriage is teamwork. Marriage is give and take.



BONUS ROOM!

10 spicy convo starters

- 1 *Where is your favorite place to be touched that isn't sexual to you?*
- 2 *When I initiate sex, what is the first thing that comes to mind?*
- 3 *What is your favorite way for me to initiate sex?*
- 4 *How do you usually try and let me know that you are in the mood?*
- 5 *What does sex mean to you?*
- 6 *Describe your favorite memory of us having sex.*
- 7 *Where and how do you like to be touched the most during sex? Why?*
- 8 *Where do you not like to be touched during sex, and why not?*
- 9 *Describe something you'd like to try regarding sex, that we haven't tried together.*
- 10 *Describe something we have tried before, regarding sex, that you'd like more of.*



SO... WHICH ROOM DO WE START IN?

We've gone from room to room in your house, exploring how to cultivate authentic intimacy and a healthier relationship with your spouse. You've learned how each room is furnished with marital potential. Every room contained inspiring words and insights into practical changes. More than that, each room contained the real questions you need to be asking to promote growth in your relationship.

You started in your bedroom, wondering why sex dies in marriage and how to bring it back to life. Hopefully, room by room, you've discovered deeper, more productive questions to ask. Questions that transcend the act of sex itself. Questions about happiness, love, and communication. Questions you and your spouse can work through, no search engine required. No comment section needed.

Which room do you start renovating your relationship in? These renovations don't begin in any particular *place*. They begin with a particular *person*. It all starts with **you**.

Why you?

What about your spouse? *What about them?* Of course, they aren't perfect. Certainly, they're part of the problems in your relationship and in your sex life. Here are three rock-solid reasons why the change you want to see is the change you need to be.

1 Change has to start somewhere.

It has to start with someone. Change just needs to start. Growth requires a catalyst, then it builds momentum. You can be the catalyst. You can love courageously. No regrets.

2 Change has to begin with what's in your control.

That's you and only you. You can go your entire life waiting for circumstances to change. You can go your whole life waiting for the people around you to change. Way down the line, you'll just find your whole life is gone.

3 Change in a relationship, by definition, only requires a change in one person.

One person needs to take the first step. Don't underestimate the impact you can have on your spouse and your marriage. You can be the lens that brings everything into focus for your spouse. Be your best self for yourself, regardless. Get any help and support you need. Be able to honestly say, "*I'm doing everything I can do for this relationship and this marriage.*"

Why does sex die in marriage? Because *love* dies. Because *friendship* dies. Because *happiness* dies. Because *communication* dies.

How do you revive sex?
Revive all that other stuff.

HOW TO REVIVE YOUR RELATIONSHIP

1 Fixate on the good.

Focus on, explore, and be grateful for your spouse's positive qualities. They're there.

2 Remember why you married them in the first place.

What drew you to your spouse? What kept you on the phone with them so long? What made you change all your other plans to be with them? Why was sex with them so desirable in the first place?

3 Do the loving thing, even when you don't feel like it.

Even when the ledger is imbalanced. Even when your spouse doesn't deserve it. Not only will your spouse be transformed, but you will be too. *And the feelings will follow.*

4 Don't forget you're only human.

If you want to **get sex right**, if you want to get your marriage right, you have to become aware of your own **wrongness**. Not to sit in self-pity. Not to lower your self-image. Just recognize that *you're not perfect*. Cultivate humility. When we recognize our own faults and frailty, we are less likely to be judgmental, critical, and demanding. We're less likely to fixate on our spouse's faults when we're in touch with our own.

Sex is easy. The birds and the bees don't have "dead bedrooms." Our problem isn't that we don't know how to make love to our spouse. Our problem is that we don't know how to make love *for* our spouse. We don't know how to make a heart so full of love that it will animate the body to connect with the object of its affection. **We want changes in the bedroom, but are we willing to change how we love and listen in the other rooms?**



TIME IS RUNNING OUT

**This is your life and it's ending
one minute at a time.**

For an average 80-year life, subtract:

Sleeping (33 years)

Working (14 years)

Looking at screens (11 years)

Eating (4.6 years)

Vacationing (3.1 years)

Exercising (1.3 years)

Romancing and sex (395 days)

Socializing (368 days)

Schooling (334 days)

Standing in line (235 days)

Miscellaneous time drains

You get about **8 years of
*unoccupied time in your life***

(or roughly 3,000 days)

That means you only have...

5.5

YEARS

(2,070 days)

**If you're in
your 20s**

4.5

YEARS

(1,680 days)

**If you're in
your 30s**

3.5

YEARS

(1,320 days)

**If you're in
your 40s**

**What will you choose to fill
those unoccupied moments with?**

(Hold that thought.)

This isn't about "time management." You can't "manage" time; you can only manage yourself. That's all. **This is about perspective and priorities.** Happily married couples only get 24 hours in their day, just the same as unhappily married couples. Sexually fulfilled couples get the same 7-day week as sexually unfulfilled couples. *Their marriages aren't perfect, but what are they doing differently?*

They're thinking outside the bedroom, and their bedroom is the better for it. Those couples have their questions and struggles with sex too. But they look inside themselves and inside their spouse instead of inside search results. Happily married people with satisfying sex lives aren't posting in the comment section. *They're having hard conversations with their spouse.* They don't drift outside their marriage because of problems inside their marriage. They admit when they need help and get it. *Because there is no time to waste, and they play the long game: legacy.*

The clock is ticking...

Remember: On Google, the top complaint about a marriage is not having sex. Searches for “sexless marriage” are three and a half times more common than “unhappy marriage” and eight times more common than “loveless marriage.” There are 16 times more complaints about a spouse not wanting sex than about a married partner not being willing to talk.

Is sex exponentially more important to you than happiness, love, and a spouse you can talk to? You can fixate on the bedroom and potentially lose your entire home, or you can focus on your spouse in the other rooms of your house and have the bedroom of your dreams. *Choose wisely.*

Where you invest is where you earn interest.



The secret to a happy marriage is if you can be at peace with someone within four walls, if you are content because the one you love is near to you, either upstairs or downstairs, or in the same room, and you feel that warmth that you don't find very often, then that is what love is all about.

BRUCE FORSYTH



your marriage is in a **two-story** home

Whether you live in an apartment or a mansion, your marriage exists in a **Two-Story Home**. There's the story of your marriage up until today. And there's also the story of your marriage that begins right now.

The first story is already written. You can't change it. All you can do now is learn from it, grow from it, and let go of it. But this is a **Two-Story Home**. The second story is yet to be written. It starts now, and it's vibrating with possibilities and hope. Your opening chapters may contain hardships and heartaches, but that's the way all the classic stories begin.

*the best part of your second story home is that you and your spouse get to **write it** and **right it**.*

resources

[Everybody Lies: Big Data, New Data, and What the Internet Can Tell Us About Who We Really Are By Seth Stephens-Davidowitz](#)

[The 5 Best Online Sex Therapy Programs of 2021](#)

[200 Questions For Couples](#)

[37 Questions To Ask Your Spouse About Sex](#)

[Health & Aging](#)

[What to Do If Your Partner Is Uninterested in Sex](#)

[5 Ways to Protect Your Sex Life From Your Kids](#)

[Having A Dedicated Sex Room](#)

[Just Because You're Kinda Curious](#)

[Maybe You're Really Curious](#)



ABOUT THE AUTHOR

john daum

is a Healthy Relationship Facilitator for First Things First. He is passionate about strengthening relationships. With two degrees under his belt and several years of relationship mentoring, John has found his niche in writing blogs, ebooks and creating content to help transform lives. He is married to his wife, Monica, and they have 5 children, Shaffer, Søren, Davin, Given, and Jude. In his free time, he enjoys stories through books, movies and conversations.

[more resources written by john](#)



[FIRSTTHINGS.ORG](https://www.firstthings.org)

