

Keep The Home Fires Burning



As we approach a change in seasons, temperatures will be changing. As temperatures shift slowly to become colder outside our focus is on keeping things warm on the “inside”.



For couples, it is equally important to keep an eye on the “other thermostat” in the household...particularly the one in the bedroom. How warm have things been? Has it “been awhile” since your sexual connection has heated up?



Many couples in mid-life have experienced, and come to accept, a gradual erosion of their sex lives. Physical changes or illness may make either partner less interested in sex. In other cases, the seeds of avoidance were planted in the marriage long ago... but effectively masked by the distractions of children and careers. Without those relationship distractors, the couple comes face-to-face with their physical disconnection.



It is important not to settle for a “sexless” marriage. Sex is an essential “nutrient” and without it, a couple can be sure that their marriage will lose its vitality. When sex is good in a marriage, it is a source for physical pleasure and a way to connect emotionally and spiritually with your partner.



The toll that a marriage takes when sex is absent can be dramatic. Often the touching, kissing and other forms of physical affection disappear as well. Marriage then becomes a bond of obligation, shared activities and responsibilities. When the friendship is missing, partners distance further from each other while anger and hurt percolate beneath the surface.



Things to Review:

Is the lack of interest or sexual desire...

- a biological problem?
- a lifestyle consequence?
- a symptom of a larger problem?

Are any of these factors impacting either you?

- Biological changes
- Depression
- Children
- Lack of energy & fatigue
- Sleep deprivation
- Jealousy & resentment
- Distorted “body-image”

Things to Consider Doing:

If your sexual relationship is not satisfactory...

- Stay away from blaming and complaining and ask for what you want. Be specific.
- Find out what your partner wants. Learn about their preferences or shifts in desire.
- Make time for your marriage. Dedicate time for “just the two of you.” No cell phones or pagers. Turn off the TV, or take time away from the kids.
- Be sure to keep yourself attractive and desirable as a partner. Pay attention to your hygiene and overall appearance.

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- Get professional help. If you have tried several things to no avail...bring in a 3rd party to facilitate new ideas and conversations.

Getting and staying” in sync” sexually takes the effort of both partners. One person can not carry the weight of a couple’s sexual life. No matter how distant you and your partner can become...it is never too late to bridge the desire gap.

Dan Haycraft, MD and Meg Haycraft, LCSW of Wilmette are the founders of TWogether, Inc. a premier educational and counseling resource for couples. To contact them, call (847) 920-9444 or visit www.twogether.org.

