

# LDS Couples & Sexual Intimacy

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Sexual behavior is an interesting part of LDS culture and an integral part of us as human beings. It often starts with boys or girls

giggling about the opposite genders underwear that is showing or chasing others when playing games but in a semi-flirtatious way that often is more about showboating than flirting. From pre-pubesence into young adulthood, children and teens are taught by parents and church leaders that sexual behavior is to be reserved for marriage. The teaching and doctrine about sexual purity is quite clear; no sexual relations before marriage. In recent years the Brethren have even clarified it more the publication of the Strength of Youth pamphlets. Often well meaning parents and other mentors are so afraid to discuss sexual intimacy or sexuality in general with their kids, that when it does come time and they become more aware of their own sexuality in early adolescence they shy away from it. If they are not shying away they are often more attracted to the secret and taboo-like nature of it, like a moth to the flame, heading in concentric circles to explore and understand. I meet countless parents that are not confident on how to talk to their teens about sexuality. Sad thing is, I seem many of the same parents in my office due to the faulty fixed beliefs they have around their own sexual behavior. In an effort to keep sexual relationships held at bay and only within the bounds of marriage, our youth are not educated and thus develop distorted views around sexual intimacy. Sexuality

becomes something that is taboo or secret. The secrets build speculation and exploration and confusion. They turn to peers and other “safe” places for education, like the internet. I don’t see the internet as particularly safe but safe in respect to their perception of where they can get information and not feel guilt or shame about it. These kind of sensitive questions are much easier found with a few mouse clicks. The problem is they often get a deluge of sexual filth and end up not getting educated or informed but confused and misled.

As they grow up and enter into a marriage they base their perceptions on what they saw or learned from their parents and their own life learning. If misinformation, doubt, fear, and unhealthy expectations were brought into the marriage sexuality and sexual intimacy can be a large morass of difficulty. For example, I had a client that came into a marriage with her husband thinking that she was to only have sexual intercourse when hoping to have children, it was simply an act to have kids not something couples do regularly to unify, bond, and connect. This and a long list of faulty beliefs about sexual intimacy can bring conflict and pain into a marriage and years of shallow bonding and tension around sexual matters.

So couples embark on this journey of marriage and move through a paradoxical divide. One minute they are not to do more than hand holding and kissing and after the wedding or temple sealing they move into all out sexual activity. Often young couples are uninformed (due to shame and taboo in their families of origin) and unsure. During this time of acclimation to sexual behavior, which occurs nearly overnight for most LDS couples, many can struggle, especially women. I had one client that said, “I just couldn’t face my dad the next day.” or “I

just felt so dirty after. I mean I know it is right and all ...” So the problem is that lack of information and teaching from parents and other mentors. Taboo and secrecy is fostered by a culture of we-don’t-talk-about-that-you’ll-figure-it-out-when-you-get-married kind of mentality. The result is sexually unsatisfied marriage and couples guessing what the other is feeling and desiring. Doubts about how to connect, how sexual intimacy is natural and part of a healthy relationship, and how this is more than a mere behavior but a relational component that unites and bonds a marriage. Just as zinc oxide galvanizes steel and keeps oxygen and other caustic materials from corroding it, so does healthy, respectful, passionate and loving sexual intimacy shore up couples relationship so that their unification becomes a fortress of strength.

The most important organ in sexual activity is the brain. Your thoughts and emotions are tied together and influence what you experience. Passion and love that can exist often does not when men and women are caught up in their minds with fear and doubt. It is important to work on your marriage and relationship in order to settle and liberate the mind/heart and then in turn your soul. Then, and often only then will you be uninhibited and be fully be present with our spouse. It is this being “in the now” that allows you to reap the harvest that is yours when you are able to sexually connect in a way that builds and bonds.

### What to do?

Educate,  
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Educate.  
If you  
have  
children,  
get



educated. Open the discussion up to them. If

you are not comfortable with talking about sex then you must educate yourself. You can do so by reading up and getting some clarity on sexuality and intimacy. I recommend two books in particular. The text is “And They Were Not Ashamed – Strengthening Marriage Through Sexual Fulfillment” by Laura Brotherson. The second book is by a well respected therapist that I admire, Wendy Watson Nelson titled, Purity and Passion.

Ideas for implementing this article:

- Have your spouse read this article and then discuss it as a couple.
- Do some ‘research’ on your wife or husband, what do they like? What can you do to support your marriage so that you can be ‘fully present and in the now’ during sexually intimate moments?
- Write a list of your beliefs, ones from childhood. Discuss and process if they are helping or cumbering your thoughts, feelings, and marriage.
- Share with your spouse, assert yourself and talk about what you enjoy and what makes you feel close to him or her.

### Education - Visit with a licensed therapist

Speaking with a professional can help iron out questions, concerns, and past patterns within your own thinking and/or relationship around issues of sexuality.

### Online Resources

I have included two video clips that I feel highlight many of the issues I find in therapy working with my clients. See the videos below. Laura has some solid counsel by a woman, for a woman.

The two videos below (links) can be helpful for many women (sorry men, didn’t find any

good videos to include for you) in exploring and understanding sexuality as a part of who they are and how they relate to their husbands.

Secrets of Sexually Satisfied Wives by Laura Brotherson on YouTube at <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=NhAjuXqTzcQ>

8Ts Female Sexual Response by Laura Brotherson on YouTube at <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=P2XIKTX0xlw>

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