



SEX ^{vs.} INTIMACY

WHICH FORCE DRIVES YOUR RELATIONSHIP?

Sex vs. Intimacy

Which force drives your relationships?

by Dr. Laura Dabney, the Intimacy MD

This month we're talking about sex. So why not try something new?

The Sex vs. Intimacy Quiz

How much do you know about these two powerful forces? And which one is in the driver's seat when it comes to your relationships?

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Question One:

Foreplay and sex go hand-in-hand. Which of the following best matches your thoughts on how to ensure one follows the other?

- A. It's all about getting her (or him) into the bedroom. If you spend enough time getting the mood right physically, sex is pretty much a certainty.
- B. It's about finding the right moment. If either one of us is exhausted or distracted, there's not much hope of sex. But when we're both game, it's a pretty sure thing.
- C. It's all about connecting emotionally. If we waited until we were both in the mood or the kids weren't sick or neither one of us were stressed at work, we'd never have sex. Making a dedicated effort to connect with each other leads to way more sex than jumping into bed together.

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Question Two:

It's often said that make-up sex is the best sex. Which of the following best matches your thoughts on why?

- A. The physical rush of sex takes care of all the pent-up energy from the fight and makes me feel better.
- B. Arguments can be mentally draining. Sex is a way of saying, "We're still a couple"; it brings us together, instead of seeing each other as the enemy like we do when we fight.
- C. Sex can be just as emotional as it is physical. Make-up sex is great because if you've just resolved an argument together, you're connecting on the most intimate level possible.

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Question Three:

In your experience, what's the biggest warning signal that your relationship may be on the rocks?

- A. You hardly have sex anymore.
- B. You may have sex as much as you used to, but you're fighting more often.
- C. You seem to be living on two different planets and hardly spend any time together, let alone have sex with each other.

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Question Four:

If your partner says (s)he wants to increase the intimacy in your relationship, how are you most likely to try doing that?

- A. Give her more gifts and initiate sex more often.
- B. Agree with her more.
- C. Make an attempt to connect with her emotionally, even when you sense you're not on the same page about an issue.

How did you do?

Score your quiz by giving yourself the following points:

- 1 point for each time you answered A
- 2 points for each time you answered B
- 3 points for each time you answered C

Four to Five Points:

Your understanding of intimacy runs toward the physical. You most likely confuse the two concepts and, as a result, may put a premium on the amount of sex you're having in your relationships, rather than on the emotional intimacy you establish with your partners. Keep reading.

Six to Eight Points:

You've got a grasp on the fact that physical sex and emotional intimacy are not one in the same. Keep reading to learn more about why, as well as ideas on how to continue to build the intimacy in your relationships.

Nine to Twelve Points:

Congratulations, you know the crucial role emotional intimacy plays in the health of our relationships. Keep reading for ideas on how to keep the intimacy strong.

Sex vs. Intimacy: The Reality

If you scored in the lower ranges, let me assure you that you are not alone. I've worked with hundreds of men (and women) who struggle in their relationships under the same misconceptions.

Many men think of intimacy as gifts, fun, romance and sex. They believe it can be built via physical acts—through trips to the Bahamas, to the mall, to the bedroom. And that's the heart of the misunderstanding between sex and intimacy: Intimacy cannot be built physically because it's more than that. Intimacy is a feeling, an emotional state, one that expands beyond the physical closeness of sex.

Intimacy is really about transparency. It's about letting your partner see the good, the bad and the ugly about you as a *whole* person. When viewed from this perspective, being honest with your partner about your feelings—how her joke at your expense made you angry or how you feel neglected when she spends your evenings together texting with friends, or, or, or—is really just as intimate as having morning sex.

Sex is physical, yes. But intimate sex is satisfying both physically and emotionally. And who wouldn't want more of that?

Want to learn more?

Call now for your free, 15-minute consultation with a member of Dr. Dabney's team. Geography is never a problem and your access to one of the nation's top relationship experts is unparalleled, thanks to our *Live & Online* therapy options.

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About Dr. Laura Dabney, the Intimacy MD

Relationship stress is no match for Dr. Dabney. Every week, she works with patients in dozens of cities across the United States, helping them break the patterns of past relationships and beat a path to a happier, healthier future. She owns a leading clinical practice in Virginia Beach and has been Board Certified in Psychiatry. Download her latest articles, read real-life case studies and learn more about her offerings at www.DrLDabney.com.