

RESOURCES

Books

Sex and Love in Intimate Relationships - Robert Firestone, Lisa Firestone and Joyce Catlett (APA Books)

Fear of Intimacy - Robert Firestone and Joyce Catlett (APA Books)

Conquer Your Critical Inner Voice - Robert Firestone, Lisa Firestone and Joyce Catlett (New Harbinger)

Falling in Love. Why We Choose the Lovers We Choose - Ayala Malach Pines (Routledge Press)

The Truth about Love - Pat Love (Fireside Books)

Rekindling Desire: A Step by Step Program to Help Low-Sex and No-Sex Marriages - Barry McCarthy and Emily McCarthy (Brunner Routledge - Taylor Francis Group)

Glendon Association Videotapes and DVDs

Exploring Relationships (52 min)

The Fear of Intimacy: An Examination of Withholding Behavior Patterns (52 min)

Sex and Society: Everyday Abuses to Children's Emerging Sexuality (55 min)

Closeness Without Bonds (28 minutes)

Websites

www.glendon.org

www.psychalive.com

www.apa.org/topics

www.healthysex.com

This information is provided as a community service by The Glendon Association, a 501(c)3. Our mission is to save lives and help people create more meaningful lives by addressing the social problems of suicide, child abuse, violence, and troubled interpersonal relationships.



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Be a Better Lover...

1. Learn to love yourself.

This involves learning to value yourself and your experiences. **See the whole you from a compassionate perspective.**

2. Don't be rigid.

Don't rigidly define yourself or your partner by saying "I'm just not attractive enough" or "I'm not interested in sex" or "It's my partner's fault that we have trouble with sex, he/she just doesn't know how to do it right."

3. Be open to new experiences sexually.

Be willing to try new things and be adventurous. Discover the things that make you feel excited. Avoid the pitfall of becoming routinized about the way you make love, when, where, and how you're going to do it.

4. Share activities with your partner.

Relationships don't exist in a vacuum. **It's important to share activities with your partner in order to enhance the feelings of closeness between you.**

5. Look for a kernel of truth in what you hear from your partner, and see any criticism as an opportunity to develop yourself.

Try not to overreact to criticism from your partner by falling apart, shouting back, or giving him or her the "silent treatment." **Be open to what your partner says to you. Reflect on the information to learn about yourself.**

6. Learn to accept loving responses.

It's very important to let your partner love you and to not ward off expressions of love directed toward you. Although it seems paradoxical, many people react negatively to positive acknowledgment and love. Disregarding a positive response from your partner hurts his or her feelings.

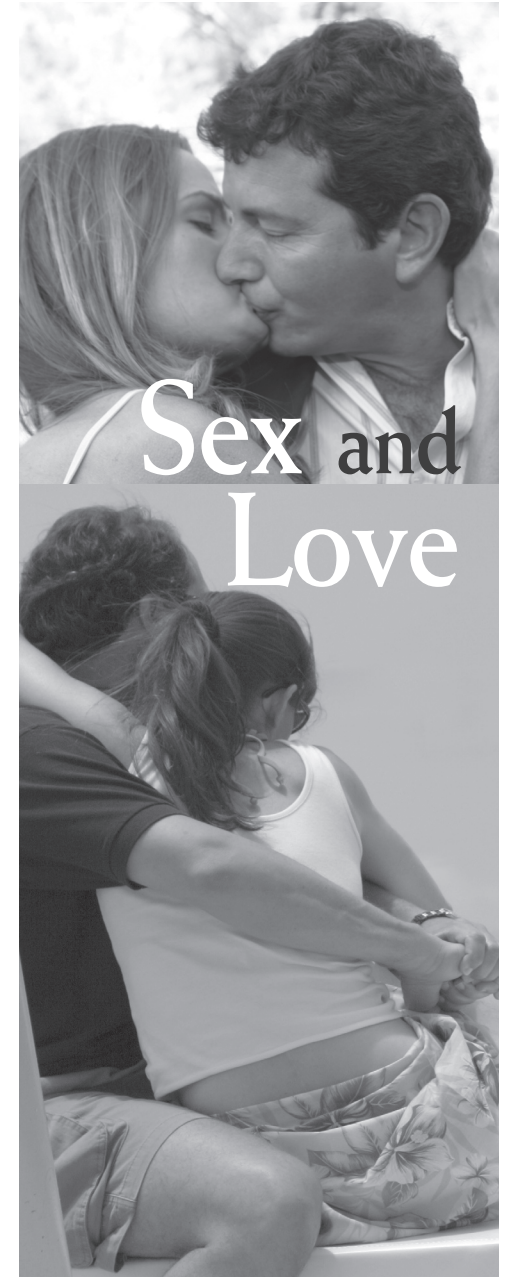
7. Be open to learning how to love.

Learning to love is a lifelong endeavor so don't be hard on yourself. It takes practice to learn how to express your loving feelings. Show your love through your behavior, through acts of kindness and generosity.

8. Trust that you can get your needs met by another person.

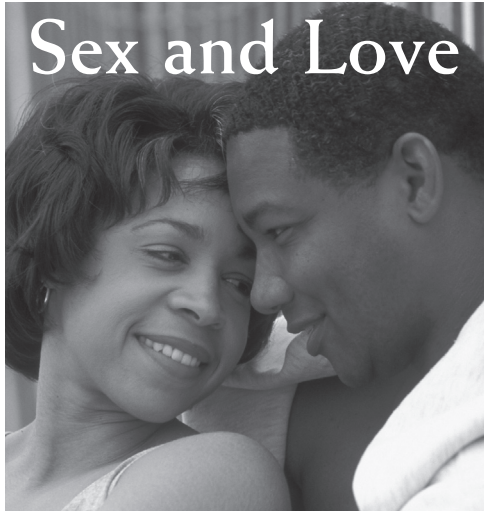
Learn to ask for what you want and need. People who have been hurt find it difficult to trust that they can have their wants and needs met by others. They believe that only they can take care of themselves.

It's natural to want to protect yourself if you've been hurt in the past. But the guard that you put up as a protection is now a barrier against letting love into your life. **You need to take a chance on trusting another person.**



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Sex and Love



Do you ever judge yourself in a sexual situation?

Many people worry and evaluate themselves during sex. They tend to think of sex more as a performance to be judged than as an opportunity to be close physically and emotionally to their partner.

Take sex out of the realm of a performance by staying close emotionally to your partner, by going slow, by having eye contact, and by being tender and sensitive in expressing your affection. Remain in touch with your own feelings and sensations: try to stay in your body and not in your head.

Do you ever find yourself feeling distracted while making love?

Many people get distracted by thoughts during sex. They may have critical thoughts about their body, they may worry about their performance, or they may be concerned about satisfying their partner. These thoughts interfere with having a satisfying sexual experience.

Say something to your partner when you find yourself feeling distracted. Remember the goal here is to stay close. Completing the sex act or having an orgasm does not have to be the ultimate goal of lovemaking. Staying close emotionally will leave you feeling more satisfied.

Do you find it difficult to talk with your partner about sex?

You're not alone! Most of us find it difficult to talk about sex, even with the people closest to us. We banter about it with our friends, but to have a meaningful conversation about sex with our partner is a whole different matter.

Set aside a time, outside the sexual situation, to talk with your partner about how you feel sexually. Even though you may feel hesitant at first, it's important to talk with your partner. In your conversation, balance talking with listening. Really listen to your partner as he or she reveals how he or she feels sexually.

Do you ever find yourself withdrawing from your partner or doing something to create distance after an especially close and satisfying sexual experience?

Recognize that being close to your partner during sex can be challenging. One way that people create distance is by focusing on their partner's negative traits or by trying to start an argument. Or they may think that their partner didn't really enjoy the experience. If you start thinking or acting in any of these ways, STOP! Reflect for a few minutes on what might really be going on.

Think back and try to determine if this is a pattern in your life – to pull away from your partner after a close sexual experience.



Do you ever feel that sex is not for you?

Remember, your sexuality is a vital part of who you are. The feelings you have about yourself as a sexual person, as a man or woman, are an essential part of your basic identity. These feelings affect how you feel in every area of your life.

Do you find it difficult to combine love and sex in a close relationship?

You can develop yourself personally and learn to accept the special combination of love and sex.

Many people find it difficult to be invested in a relationship, to take a chance, or to be vulnerable to feeling both emotionally close and sexually loving. This combination of feelings is precious, yet it's very hard to accept. It challenges any negative self image and can bring up feelings about future loss of one's partner or one's self.

What is Healthy Sexuality?

"Healthy sexuality is a natural extension of affection, tenderness, and friendship between two people. When both partners are fully present, in close emotional contact with each other, and enjoying giving and receiving affection and sexual pleasure, their lovemaking contributes a great deal to their emotional well-being and overall satisfaction in life."

Sex & Love in Intimate Relationships
by Robert Firestone, Lisa Firestone, Joyce Catlett