

This excerpt is from the RCA 2015 Fall Hand-in-Hand Newsletter pages 11-13

(5) Does Your RCA Group Ever Talk About Sex?

About sex as one of the “Deadly Issues” in RCA? Sex versus intimacy? Sex **and** intimacy? About having a dysfunctional sexual relationship? Fear of sex, sexual addiction and co-addiction, sex and power, sexual abuse / wounds / trauma / relapse / acting out? Sex and love, sex and affection, sexual touching / moratorium / contracts / fidelity? Sex in sobriety?

In our own particular coupleship and at our individual programs, it seems rare to hear any mention of healthy sexuality. And in our RCA Home Group for years the uneasy joke was, “In this meeting we talk about sex once a year - **whether we want to or not!**” At one weekly meeting our speaker couple shared for 20 minutes -- exclusively and solely on re-modeling their home -- and then at the end abruptly announced, “And tonight for general sharing the topic is ... **SEX!**” (Yet at every annual RCA convention, seemingly there’s always a breakout session or evening speaker-couple where the advertised and very-well-attended topic is sex.)

In our local RCA group there now seems to be more openness and willingness to talk - with respect and sensitivity -- about sexual behaviours and sexual needs. Occasionally a couple will share about sex avoidance, sexual celibacy or sexual

anorexia. Others will tell of slow but steady progress together in exploring and experiencing healthier physical intimacy.

A few couples say they've found help in the **We Came To Believe** "Healthy Sexuality Inventory," developed by a long-time RCA member and trainer in the WCTB seminars. It seems to be another of those "hidden," infrequently-mentioned tools occasionally re-surfacing within the Fellowship as RCAers search for and find additional ways for restoring caring, commitment and intimacy to their coupleships.

During this exercise, we ask you to look gently, honestly, and fearlessly at your patterns of sexuality as expressed with your partner. Each individual first will complete the worksheet, then share with your partner. Sharing with a sponsor couple will follow.

Below is the Healthy Sexual Inventory

A. List family-of-origin rules about sex -- both spoken and unspoken/"understood" -- that have affected your relationship.

B. List ways that your healthy sexual growth and development may have been hurt by negative or shaming messages about sex and sexuality from important adults, teachers, friends, spiritual leaders etc.

C. List effects that previous relationships or sexual experiences have had on your present sexual relationship. List effects that are currently impacting your sexual relationship.

D. List ways that your individual addiction(s) co-addiction(s) and / or sexual abuse have impacted your sexual relationship.

E. List patterns of sexual behavior that have persisted even though you would like them to have changed. Perhaps you have tried to change but these patterns still exist.

F. List topics about sex and sexuality you find difficult to discuss with your partner (emotional problems, physical problems, physical needs, expectations, sexual positions, settings, timing, effect of ageing, menstrual / menopausal concerns, birth control preferences, children, pregnancy, media).

G. We have written about family-of-origin rules, past relationships, and unhealthy patterns in your present sexual relationship. How would you like to change?

H. List ways that you have tried to communicate intimacy through your sexual interactions, both verbally and non-verbally. This may include many types of touch.

I. List specific times when you felt both spiritually and sexually connected with your partner. What made it special to you? This may not necessarily be times of genital sexuality. Be honest and gentle with yourself. An abuse survivor or sex / love addict may have struggled in this area.

Now share with your partner. It is very important that each partner witness and listen with respect and sensitivity. Remember the Safety Guidelines.

After witnessing to your partner sharing her / his life experience through sexuality, write a note, or draw a picture in your partner's StepWork book or elsewhere. Dedicate yourself to the support of your partner and to your growth together through this affirmation.

Share your individual and couple sexual inventory with a sponsor couple.

As a couple together, make a list of recovery Steps, tools, and ideas you might use to let go of old hurts, mistrusts, or un-wanted patterns of sexual behaviour (e.g., support group meeting, weekly gratitude inventory, meditation), and ideas you might try in order to bring new life to your sexual intimacy. For you, it may include a commitment to develop a new life together and new boundaries, and thus it might include a period of genital celibacy.

Let us remind ourselves that spiritual sexuality is a connecting of spirits that encompasses a wide range of life experiences. Reflection Fourteen speaks to living intimately in the present – to sensuality, spirituality and sexuality:

“Our senses are the gateway to the present. More than stopping to smell the roses, sensuality is a direct path to spirituality. Being in touch with our senses will help us to be present for each other both spiritually and sexually.”

Anonymous