AN EXPLORATORY CASE STUDY OF MEN'S EXPERIENCE OF INTIMACY AS EXPRESSED IN MARRIAGE

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By

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We hereby approve the dissertation

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DISSERTATION ABSTRACT

An Exploratory Case Study of Men's Experience of Intimacy as Expressed in Marriage

by

Lilly D. Nakamura

This dissertation is based on an exploratory case study of six married men and their experience of intimacy in marriage. The study was created to elicit and understand the subjects' inner processes of relating in their marriage from thoughts and feelings about specifics rather than generalities.

The subjects were selected by the following criteria: they must have been married at least seven years; they must have no known severe marital problems; and the wife must be satisfied with the husband's capacity for intimacy, as determined by this researcher's questionnaire.

Each subject was interviewed for two hours. The interview schedule was designed to explore the major attributes of intimacy as defined in this study, the definition having been derived from a synthesis of the

review of the literature. Tapes of the six interviews were analyzed for experiential variables. Similarities, differences, and contrasting characteristics were found among the subjects' responses. Fundamental group patterns suggesting issues regarding male intimacy are elaborated.

The findings show that the subjects generally came from backgrounds devoid of intimacy but developed that capacity in adult life through both external and internal precipitants. Problem areas revolved around conflict, vulnerability, and regression. The subjects all had a good deal of self-awareness and were moving toward improving these areas. A profile of the subjects was abstracted from the interview data.

This study concluded that the development of intimacy is a product of consciousness developed through self-awareness resulting from relating openly and honestly with significant others. All of the subjects struggled through conflicts and pain; at the same time, each managed to develop closeness, bonding, caring, loving, and commitment in his own way.

An important aspect of the findings reveals that intimacy not only enhances the marriage, but also the psychological growth of the individuals involved.

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CHAPTER I

Introduction

Freud's famous dictum on the nature of maturity as "love and work" was the stimulus which sparked the decision to study men's significant relationships in adult life.

The study of maturity, the adult phase of human development, has been a neglected area of exploration. Erikson (1950) was one of the first observers to emphasize the necessity to look at each stage of life in the context of the total human life cycle. Only in recent years Vaillant (1977) and Levinson (1978) published two well-documented, major empirical studies on adult male development which are regarded as especially significant. However, these studies treated the "work" aspect in much more detail than the "love" aspect. The idea to study men's "love" relationships in adult life was conceived to fill a perceived significant need for research in this area.

The Grant study by Vaillant traced the developmental life of successful Harvard men covering a thirty-year period of their psychological coping and their adaptation to life. The thrust of the research was based on the question, "What facet of a person's life should we examine in order to find health?"

The interview schedule had fifty-three semi-structured questions under four major headings: (1) Work (13 questions); (2) Family (10 questions); (3) Medical (12 questions); (4) Psychological (18 questions).

A quantitative examination of the nature of the questions showed more questions dealing with work than with love.

The issue of love came under the heading of family. Out of the 10 questions, only the following four dealt with marriage:

> e. This is the hardest question that I shall ask: Can you describe your wife?
>
> f. Since nobody is perfect, what causes you concern about her?
>
> g. Styles of resolution of disagreements.
>
> h. Has divorce ever been considered? Explain. (p. 387)

Levinson and his associates studied forty men in their middle years. Developing the question, "What does it mean to be an adult male?" he analyzed the life structure of men in relation to important choices in adult life, such as "work, family, friendships, and love relationships of various kinds." The research was conducted by biographical interviews, "a clinical interview and a conversation between friends." Levinson also treats work, "men realizing their

dreams," in fuller detail than love, seeming to give love a more subordinate place in the adult male development (p. 44).

Gilligan (1982) supports the view that the studies of love relationship in adult males are incomplete.

> The men in Levinson's study steady their lives by their devotion to realizing their dream, measuring their progress in terms of their distance from the shores of its promised success. Thus in the stories that Levinson recounts, relationships, whatever their particular intensity, play a relatively subordinate role in the individual drama of adult development.
>
> The focus of the work is also apparent in George Vaillant's (1977) account of adaptation to life. The variables that correlate with adult adjustment, like the interview that generates the data, bear predominantly on occupation. (p. 152-153)

Gilligan suggests that "Vaillant emphasizes the relationship of self to society and minimizes attachment to others" (p. 154). She sees Vaillant's "hardest question...Can you describe your wife?" as an example of the limitation in this particular sample of men. The prefatory comment "hardest question" most likely came from Vaillant's study of these men's experiences.

In contrast to adult male development, adult female developmental studies show that women consistently describe their lives in relation to others rather than to occupational roles. "Women tend to see

maturity as a product of attachment, commitment, and care" (Hancock 1981, p. vi).[1]

If Freud's dictum is significant, it appears that an important aspect of adult male development, "love," has been a neglected area of research. The lack of in-depth data on the subject became the motivation for this study, an exploration of men's experience of intimacy as expressed in marriage. Rather than the word "love," the word "intimacy" was chosen because it gave a broader operational definition.

Purpose

This study was an effort to understand the experience of men who appeared to have stable intimate marriages of seven years and over. The study had two other purposes:

1. To gather descriptive data reported by men about their experience of marital intimacy.

2. To analyze the data in order to generate hypotheses for further study.

In light of the stated purposes, the questions were designed to elicit the personal experience of the subjects which reflected specific acts of behavior, feelings, and thoughts through examples rather than generalizations. The following concerns

guided the questions:

1. A statement of personal history. No one is immune from his past, and a life course has an "historical accumulation of a person's responses and orientation" (Smelser 1980, p. 23).

2. A statement of reciprocal self-disclosure, necessary to interpersonal intimacy (Derlega & Chaikin, 1975).

3. A statement of life phase--autonomy, dependence, and interdependence--in relation to intimacy (Lynch 1982, McMahon 1978).

4. A statement of adaptive response when life situation is challenged (Smelser, p. 23): the process to hear, accept, absorb, resolve or not resolve interpersonal conflicts, hostility, and regression (Douvan, 1977, p. 26).

5. A statement of sexuality and intimacy.

6. A statement of self-description. How would you describe yourself in matters of intimacy and relationships?

Significance of the Study

Review of the literature indicates a scarcity of reference to the quality, depth, or reciprocity of intimacy in social science research. Psychological

research has been concerned with dyadic relationships with frequent "reference to Freud's possibly apocryphal mention of the capacity for love as a criterion of mental health" (Lowenthal & Haven, 1968, p. 21).

Past couple or family research shows that when only one member was interviewed, it has been either the college student (53%) or the wife (33%), but rarely the husband/father (3%) (Ruano, Bruce, & McDermott 1969, p. 689). This information is supported by Spanier and Lewis (1980), who report that prior to 1970 men were often omitted in research relating to the quality of marriage. However, during the 1970's there was a significant trend showing studies increasingly including men.

There is a paucity of research on men's positive experience of intimate relationship. The studies on adult males have focused on their instrumental work life rather than expressive intimate life. Literature proliferates with examples of men's limited capacity for intimacy as compared to women. At the same time, study after study has shown that women want a greater quality of intimacy and communication in their marriage than do men (Fasteau 1974, Field 1979, Halas 1981, Karlsson 1951, Komarovsky 1967, Rubin 1984, Tavris 1977, Zube 1982).

Levinger (1977) also notes a suggestion, made by Zelditch, that there is a gender difference in the expectation of intimacy in our culture, as well as in most others, in that until recent years men tended to be more concerned with "material achievement" and women with "care and nurturance." Douvan believes that the male's historical pioneer-heritage-based strivings for independence, achievement, and success have interfered with his ability to involve himself in a close relationship (p. 27).

Further studies on men's close relationships have indicated that close friendships are rare among men, and men in general have difficulty in revealing feelings (Fasteau, Levinson, Lewis 1978). Feelings are the prime mover in human behavior (Fine 1978, Gaylin 1979), and the disclosing of feelings is a major means for one person to become close to another.

On the issue of friendship, Levinson writes:

> As a tentative generalization we would say that close friendship with a man or woman is rarely experienced by American men. This is not something that can be adequately determined by a questionnaire or mass survey. The distinction between friend and acquaintance is often blurred. (p. 335)

Another concern was the high divorce rate. Marital problems are among the three most common reasons why people come for therapy (Prochaska 1978, p.

2). Berman and Lief (1975) believe that marital therapy has increasingly become an important consideration of psychotherapists. They refer to a survey by Sager and Associates (1968) which demonstrates that 50% of the patients request therapy because of marital difficulties, and another 25% have problems related to marriage. Also, according to Gurin and Associates (1960), as reported in Berman and Lief, among the emotional problems for which people seek help, marital problems rank first, followed by family problems (p. 583). Money problems and in-laws have been ranked as major causes of marital discord in past research, but the latest research indicates the lack of communication between husbands and wives is in first place, with ninety-five per cent of the counselors calling it the most common problem in marriage (Fury 1981, p. 27). Communication and intimacy are intertwined. Indeed, more information is needed to understand the intimate working of marriages. McMahon (1978) writes:

> Of course many marriages 'fail.' We probably know more about that than anything else regarding marriage. We know little of what actually transpires in successful marriages, however. It is, perhaps, the most important relationship for most people, yet little effort has been made to study its dynamics, particularly with regard to the psychological development of the individual. (p. 115)

It is hoped that on just such psychological development this study was able to shed some light.

It is also believed that the study will facilitate couples work by providing further understanding of the nature of positive relatedness. Overall, the research was prompted by the desire to improve our knowledge and understanding of intimate relationships. While many people seek and find love and closeness, they have not learned how to maintain the kind of relationship they desire.

CHAPTER II

Review of the Literature

This chapter presents a critical review of the literature relevant to the present research: (a) Concept of Intimacy, (b) Intrapsychic/Interpersonal Process in Intimacy, (c) Male Development and Intimacy, (d) Separation-Individuation and Intimacy, (e) Regression and Intimacy, and (f) Sex and Intimacy. Although these different aspects of intimacy are interrelated, they are discussed under separate headings for expansion and clarification.

Concept of Intimacy

The concept of intimacy is rarely discussed in clinical literature, yet every clinician knows intimacy is an integral part of his/her practice. Intimacy is essential for client-therapist alliance. Intimacy is one of the major issues in clients' problems. Intimacy in communication is essential for close marital or family relationships.

Fisher and Stricker (1982), the editors, write in the preface of their impressive thought-provoking book, Intimacy:

> Intimacy is a complex and heterogeneous concept that has generated a variety of definitions, theories, and philosophies

> over the years. Although there is much disagreement about the essential meaning of the term, there seems to be a consensus that intimacy, whatever it may be, is of central importance in human relationships, and specifically in the theory and practice of psychotherapy. (p. xi)

In their collection of 26 original papers, Fisher and Stricker explored the concept of intimacy as presented by well known psychologists and psychiatrists. They discovered that the authors defined intimacy from two different approaches. One approach views intimacy as an intrapsychic process where an individual gains full knowledge of self and is willing to share this with another. Self-disclosure becomes "an important index of intimacy" (p. xi), but self-disclosure does not have to be reciprocated by the other.

The other approach to intimacy is interpersonal. Intimacy is viewed as a product of two people sharing innermost thoughts and feelings with each other. "Each one is able to touch something meaningful in the other" (p. xi).

Lowenthal and Haven, in their study on the concept of intimacy, were struck by the "paucity of references to the quality, depth, or reciprocity of personal relationships" in behavioral science. They also note that in "Freud's possibly apocryphal

mention of the capacity for love as a criterion of mental health...one finds little research directly related to qualities or behavior reflecting the capacity for intimacy or reciprocity" (p. 21).

The most pertinent of the definitions of "intimate" provided by Webster is: "(3) closely acquainted or associated; very familiar; as, an intimate friend; (4b) very close; (5) having illicit sexual relations: a euphemism." For the pertinent definition of "close" Webster offers, "(13) intimate, familiar, confidential." (Webster's New Twentieth Century Dictionary, Second Edition unabridged, 1970)

Etymologically speaking, according to Levenson (1974), "intimacy" derives from the Latin, intimus, which means "interior" or "most within." In its earlier literary usage, it described the most inner, private part of the individual, as in "I did not expose my most intimate feelings or thoughts." Intimacy, described thus, is an intra-psychic process in its original meaning. Only later did intimacy become an interpersonal relatedness. (p. 301)

Mahrer (1982), in the article titled "Humanistic Approaches to Intimacy," emphasizes the separation of self, the "I" from the "we." Intimacy cannot begin unless an individual has a sense of his/her own

identity as a separate entity; then only can he/she relate intimately with another. There are, then, three different meanings of intimacy:

1. An experience of intimacy occurring without a relationship. It is the experiencing and feeling of oneself.

2. An experience of intimacy between two people by mutually risking the "I."

3. A state of fusion with another that transcends the "I."

Mahrer also views the three states of intimacy in a hierarchical value system: the first state is a moderate value and is easily attainable; the second state is a higher value and a substantial achievement; and the third state, fusion, is the highest state of being (p. 155).[2]

Offering a different viewpoint, Sholevar (1981) talks about intimacy in relation to separation and individuation. He believes the capacity for intimacy without fusion depends upon a mature person who has individuated and has an identity. The balance between separation and togetherness is essential for true intimacy. (p. 185)

In similar vein, McMahon states:

> Marriage should not be viewed as people living in pairs, but rather as individuals living their lives and attempting to individuate--to become truly their unique selves--in whatever way they can. What marriage offers is the possibility of making this inner trip--from in, out--because of the necessity of experiencing and hopefully examining the vast panoply of who they are and can become--that true intimacy requires. (p. 115-116)

In a later statement McMahon (1982) views intimacy from "psychological contents," and sees relatedness as the means to human interaction called intimacy. Intimacy is seen as those ideas, feelings, attitudes, beliefs, fears and hopes that are "most within us," plus the ego process of our own perception and knowledge. "Intimacy has primary reference to...mental contents sacred to the self" (p. 296). He also says, "It refers to those areas where we experience ourselves as regressed and childlike" (p. 301). The success of a marriage, McMahon asserts, depends on how much each partner can allow regression and open up to each other and reveal the innermost self to the other. "When this occurs, intimacy is enhanced and personal growth occurs" (p. 300).[3]

McMahon's second point is expressed in the following:

> Relatedness, then, is the vehicle for the transmission of our 'most within' contents and processes, which is intimacy. Intimacy

> is not just arrival at some developmental stage; rather, it is at the heart of what it means to be a human being. (p. 297)

The "greatest advocate of relatedness in our time," McMahon believes, was Martin Buber, the theologian-philosopher. Buber's concept of I-thou as opposed to I-it is the essential core of human relatedness. He taught that "all real life is meeting...and the only real living we do is in the experiencing of others" (p. 297).

Hatfield (1982) defines intimacy as a process where the couple attempts to communicate deeply at all levels--thoughts, affects and behavior. She observes that intimate relationships are characterized by the following:

1. Intensity of liking/loving.
2. Depth and breadth of information exchanged.
3. Value of resources exchanged.
4. Variety of resources exchanged.
5. Substitutability of resources.
6. Commitment.
7. The unit of analysis--from 'you' and 'me' to 'we.' (p. 271)

Self-disclosure, according to Jourard (1964), is a prerequisite for intimacy. The inability to disclose precludes the capacity for intimate "love."

> A self-alienated person--one who does not disclose himself truthfully and fully--can never love another person nor can he be loved by the other person. Effective loving calls for knowledge of the object. How can I love a person whom I do not know? (p. 25)

Regarding self-disclosure, Buber (1958) states that intimacy requires that each partner must be authentic and reveal his innermost self. Each must be able to clearly see the other person, not a projection nor an illusion of the person.

Levenson (1974) suggests that "the most loving act" is to be "real," to be present, and to expose oneself, even if it means expressing negative feelings and creating conflicts. The negative exchanges have great value in that they can lead to deeper understanding and deeper appreciation of each other as well as provide a direction for self-examination and growth. This kind of conflict, in which "separateness" is accepted and worked through, fosters intimacy.

Douvan says that there is a tie between intimacy and hostility. "It is the ability to bear, accept, absorb, and resolve interpersonal conflict and hostility" (p. 26).

According to Martin (1976), love and intimacy as defined by Salzman is the state of being in which the "satisfaction," security, comfort and well-being of another person is just as important as your own. He

believes this is a true expression of intimacy, caring, tenderness, and a cooperative mutuality (p.41).

Levinger talks about three fundamental aspects of close relationships: involvement, representing the degree of closeness; commitment, expressing the breadth of continuity; and symmetry, referring to the quality of relatedness. He acknowledges the complexity of close relationship and that it is a "locus of ambivalence...when the very intensity complicates the recognition of positive and negative feelings; their very importance locks us into preconceived attitudes" (p. 15).

"The process is slow and gradual," is a statement made by Derlega and Chaikin (p. 142) in discussing the time element necessary to develop an intimate relationship through mutual self-disclosure and shared activities.

Love is an important component in intimacy. Kernberg (1974) refers to commitment in terms of "falling in love and remaining in love" (p. 509). He believes the capacity to fall in love and develop a lasting love relationship requires the resolution of the conflicts in various stages of psychosexual development of the person and must be understood in that light. Rosenblatt (1977) defines commitment as

"an avowed or inferred intent of a person to maintain a relationship" (p. 73), which is (like being in love) the result of personal dedication rather than external force.

Regarding love and commitment, Erikson (1963) speaks of:

> ...the capacity to commit oneself to concrete affiliation and partnership and to develop the ethical strength to abide by such commitments, even though they may call for significant sacrifices and compromises. (p. 263)

Berkman (1970) talks about developing intimate commitment as "a considerable manifestation of the will." He feels that even though people's lives can intertwine, they still may not become intimate. With the desire for intimacy taken into account, one must ask the question, "How deeply and in what way do we want to relate to each other?" Intimacy is developed through "the point of determined pursuit" (p. 2).

"Interpersonal closeness implies intimacy, understanding and commitment," states Levinger, (p. 137). There must be: (a) frequent contacts, (b) spatial closeness, (c) important common goals, (d) reciprocal self-disclosures, and (e) deep caring about each other.

Ann Morrow Lindbergh (1974) writes about love and intimacy as a creative force, an enabler:

> Love is a force in you that enables you to give other things. It is the motivating power. It enables you to give strength and power and freedom and peace to another person. It is not a result; it is a cause. It is not a product; it produces. It is a power, like money or steam or electricity. It is valueless unless you can give something else by means of it. (p. 231)

Writing on traditional love and the new mythology of love, Swidler (1980) states: "In the traditional view, a love that ended was a failure, a sign of terrible mistake in the search for self and identity." Intimacy (love) focused on "permanence and commitment." In contrast, the new mythology of intimacy focuses on "communication, understanding and quest for identity" (p. 130). Failure to maintain a relationship is not seen as necessarily negative but as a junction where individuals can learn and grow for further intimacy.

Thus, the various concepts of intimacy highlight psychological processes, such as intrapsychic, interpersonal, commitment, separation-individuation, regression, gender development, and sexuality.

Intrapsychic/Interpersonal Process in Intimacy

The intrapsychic process of intimacy requires knowledge of self. To know oneself, one must be willing to be honest, open, and explore the innermost

self. "Intimacy is seen as referring to those ideas, feelings, attitudes, beliefs, fears, and hopes that are 'most within us' (McMahon, 1982, p. 301). Mahrer views one aspect of intimacy as "bodily grounded, felt sense" (p. 141). Wolf (1982) describes the total merger of body and mind as "brain and heart become one and affect becomes a form of cognition" (p. 67). Rogers (1951) sees intimacy with self as "I can be the real me, no pretenses," where body, mind, and feelings are harmonized into one: "congruence" (p. 208). Congruence in Gestalt therapy is aware presence and is viewed as the mark of a "healthy personality." The live immediate feedback facilitates the expansion of one's awareness (Enright 1970, p. 116-117).

Derlega and Chaikin assert that self-disclosure promotes intimacy with self:

> No man came to know himself except as an outcome of disclosing himself to another person.... When a person has been able to declare himself utterly to another person, he learns how to increase his contact with his real self, and he may then be better able to direct his destiny on the basis of his knowledge. (p. 14)

Thus, one approach to intimacy can be intrapsychic, and "self-disclosure becomes an important index of intimacy" (Fisher & Stricker, p. xi). But self-disclosure does not have to be reciprocated.

The interpersonal process of intimacy requires a

minimum knowledge of self-definition, since it is not possible to relate to another unless one can separate self from other (Ehrenberg 1978, p. 124). Wolf describes similar thoughts from a Self Psychology perspective: "...total intimacy that is possible when strong cohesive selfs [sic] can seek a mutual encounter without fear of loss of self" (p. 76).

The process of interpersonal intimacy requires reciprocal self-disclosure, openness, and shared vulnerabilities (Derlega & Chaikin, Greenwald 1978, Hatfield 1982, McMahon 1982). Open and honest communication is believed to be one of the most important indices of satisfying marital relationships (Boyd & Roach 1977, p. 540). Buber, Jourard, and Bach and Wyden (1970) emphasize the importance of authenticity, being truly oneself, even at the cost of expressing negative feelings and thoughts. Negative expressions can lead to conflicts and fights, but they are real opportunities to develop understanding and acceptance for each other's fallibility as well as an opportunity to develop self-awareness in order to change and to grow. Gaylin states, "Anger requires energy and intimacy and it flourishes in a relationship of interdependency" (p. 186). He sees hurt or anger as "being touched." All these feelings reflect

involvement and caring.

Derlega and Chaikin quote Rogers on the importance of expressing any persistent feelings in an ongoing relationship. If recurring persistent feelings are not expressed, they can gradually erode the relationship (p. 71). Ehrenberg asserts intimacy does not just happen. She believes "intimate self-knowledge is the precondition for intimate relation with others and that one can't be more intimate in relating to another than one can be in relation to oneself" (p. 128).

Thus, intimacy is viewed as an intrapsychic and an interpersonal process that are closely intertwined.

Male Development and Intimacy

Freud (1905) described stages of human development, beginning at birth and leading to the oedipal struggle. He believed the difference between a boy and a girl occurred during the oedipal phase by the way in which each gender dealt with his/her mother. To become a man a boy must separate and renounce his mother and identify with his father. Mead (1952) suggests that the little boy learns to differentiate from the closest person, his mother, and "...that

unless he does so, he will never be at all" (p. 148); while a girl child remains attached to her mother and continues her identification process. Thus a male child gains his identity through the painful process of separation from the most intimate object in his early life in order to individuate (Greenson 1968, p.371).

It is a painful process that affects the male psychic structure, according to Rubin, in that, in order to protect oneself from the pain of separation, a boy child builds a set of defenses that will serve him positively and negatively the rest of his life. This is the beginning of the development of ego boundaries that are fixed and firm--barriers that rigidly separate self from other, that "circumscribe not only his relationship with others but his connection to his inner emotional life as well" (p. 56).

On the epoch of attachment and separation, Gilligan writes:

> Attachment and separation anchor the cycle of human life, describing the biology of human reproduction and the psychology of human development. The concepts of attachment and separation that depict the nature and sequence of infant development appear in adolescence as identity and intimacy and then in adulthood as love and work. (p. 151)

Erikson (1968) expands Freud's concept on love and work. He believes that a young man must complete the

task of separation from his family and become his own person before engaging in an intimate relationship, but a young woman holds her identity until she engages in an intimate relationship. Again the outlook suggests that separation is a process of identity formation for a man as attachment and intimacy is a process of identity formation for a woman. Thus there appears to be a developmental difference in the etiology of male/female needs for intimacy and relatedness (Gilligan, Hancock 1981, Lebe 1982, Rubin).

On adult development, Vaillant and Levinson have focused on individuation and achievement as the cornerstone of male maturity, and sustained relationships as adjunctive support to the male's pursuit of achievement.

Other studies on adult development have focused particularly on middle years. Neugarten (1968) found that mid-life is a time to take stock. A new time dimension emerges: time-left-to-live replaced that of time-lived-since-birth. Personal evaluation often results in revision of goals and values leading to a change in life style (Brim 1976). Sheehy (1974) wrote about age-related predictable crises in adulthood. Lowenthal, Thurnher, and Chirboga (1975) have observed there are "criss-crossing trajectories" of men and

women pointing to gender difference in developmental phases. Mayer (1978) writes about the fresh start after forty and the hope and excitement of metamorphosis as well as the anxiety that accompanies change. Gould (1978) suggests that by fifty, most people have questioned childhood beliefs and have shed illusions of absoluteness. None of these studies shed light in any depth on male intimacy.

McMahon (1982) promotes a fresh view that identity cannot be separated from intimacy.

> Intimacy is not just arrival at some developmental stage; rather it is at the heart of what it means to be a human being. It is not merely the next logical step after 'identity' has been arrived at but is actually the stuff of which 'identity'...is made, for it is in the wake of the I-Thou relationship that the I itself is changed and further created. (p. 297)

McMahon (1982) asserts intimacy is essential for growth--"indeed for life itself"--and intimacy and identity are intertwined (p. 298). This view is supported by others (Buber 1958, Douvan, Gilligan, Hancock 1981, Martin 1976, Rubin). Current research suggests that men and women differ in their outlook and need for intimacy. Women tend to identify self-hood in relation to an intimate other, but men tend not to (Gilligan, Hancock 1981, Naifeh & Smith 1984, Rubin). Thus male development appears separate from intimacy.

Separation-Individuation and Intimacy

The concept of intimacy has clinical relevance to the development of the object-relations theory of separation-individuation, not only in the formative years but as an ongoing process throughout life. Each epoch of life has its issues of symbiosis, separation-individuation, and the reworking of them to a higher stage.

The observation of Mahler (1975) and her collaborators on infant development marked a milestone in understanding the vicissitudes of human dilemma: the wish to merge and the wish to separate. They described the infant's initial state of symbiosis with the mother and the three subphases leading to the structuring of self.

In the first subphase, differentiation, the infant gradually learns through "hatching" to become a separate person from the mother and forms his/her own ego boundary. In the second subphase, practicing (12-15 months), the infant learns to crawl and stand up, and then begins to take steps to walk. This period of practicing body mastery is the most important, because the ability to move about solidifies the differentiation. In the third subphase, rapprochement (15-22 months), locomotive skills are acquired which

spur the toddler further to separation-individuation. This phase can be defined as the child's emergence as a separate autonomous human being.

Kaplan (1978) suggests that the child around two learns the concept of "mine" and "yours," "I" and "you," but "the complex dilemmas of oneness and separateness follows one throughout life and is never completely negotiated" (p. 248).

Perhaps each major developmental crisis of the life cycle can be seen as a process of further reworking the separation-individuation. This appears especially relevant to adolescence. Esman (1980) points out that Blos was the first person to develop the idea of adolescence as a "second individuation" (p. 286). Much of adolescent rebellion and experimentation is "analagous to the love affair with the world that Mahler...ascribes to the practicing toddler..." (p. 296), while the low-keyedess of the rapprochement child closely resembles the irritability and moodiness characterizing the adolescent's sense of loss and emptiness in an effort to detach and separate from the parents.

Individuation again becomes a major task in marriage, according to Lynch. She suggests that in the initial phase of marriage, couples go through a stage

of fusion, a period necessary for "bonding." "This bonding requires giving up some of the self to make the connection with another" (p. 1). Bergmann (1971) states that Freud's writing (1914, 1930) suggests that "love breaks down the barrier between self and object," and that "love revives...feelings and archaic ego states that were once active in the symbiotic phase" (p. 32). This symbiotic phase, perhaps applicable to the early marital fusion, is aptly described by Mahler (1967):

> The essential feature of symbiosis is hallucinatory or delusional, somatopsychic, omnipotent fusion with the representation of the mother and, in particular, delusion of common boundary of the two actually and physically separate individuals. (p. 742)

The second stage, according to Lynch, is the separation-individuation phase, which she calls "differentiation." This is a period when one realizes that the partner is not what he/she had projected. Then follows the disappointment and the fighting, resulting in the "differentiation," and the reworking and building of one's own sense of self again. McMahon (1978) sees the reworking as an unconscious effort of the intrinsic need of human beings to heal themselves, "...to finish the unfinished aspects of their personality, to further individuate and experience

reality in its own terms" (p. 108).

The third stage is rebuilding intimacy, getting to know the real person rather than the romantic ideal. Various clinicians have described this third stage of intimacy building. Fromm (1956) differentiated "symbiotic union" from "mature love." Symbiotic union is love between two people who have not individuated and have become one. Mature love requires "union under the condition of preserving one's integrity, one's individuality" (p. 369). In general, maturity is equated to an individual who has a strong sense of selfhood--an identity--and who can be intimate (Fairbairn 1952, Guntrip 1971, Winnicott 1965).

It appears that after the intimacy-building is completed, once again there is a separation-individuation in middle years, where there is a complete redirection of individuation between men and women. Men tend to seek out the lost part of themselves, the intimate connection, while women tend to seek out the lost part of themselves through achievements (Lowenthal, Thurnher, & Chirboga).

Separation-individuation thus appears intricately tied with intimacy from infancy through adulthood as an ongoing never-ending process of life in a quest for further growth.

In The Prophet Kahlil Gibran (1971) writes about the paradox of attachment-separation and growth:

> And stand together yet not too near together:
> For the pillars of the temple stand apart,
> And the oak tree and the cypress grow not
> in each other's shadow (p.17).

Regression and Intimacy

It is a common observation that only between the most intimate relationships do we discover not only the height of joy but the depth of despair and pain. These painful, repetitive, predictable rigid impasses are likely the vivid reenactment of painful events from childhood.

McMahon (1978) explains repetition compulsion exemplified in transference in committed couples relationship:

> Transference, however, is not merely distortion caused by the repetition compulsion. It also represents the person's creative attempt to see things in a new way. The developmental stage of intimacy exploits this proclivity and provides the committed couple the opportunity to regress safely with each other, experience their mutually distorted behavior and consequently move on, thus having a new opportunity to finish the unfinished aspects of their personality. (p. 111)
>
> As in psychoanalysis, marriage involves the experiencing and living through of transference distortions in the relationships between two people. (p. 115)

The phenomenon of regression in couples relationship is universal and widely accepted by clinicians from various persuasions. Willi (1982) explains the concept of regression in marriage as "collusion" of the unconscious interplay between partners based on similar unresolved central conflicts from childhood. Winter (1974) writes about regression in a dyadic relationship as repeating the "old movies." Lockhart (1980) sees the regressive aspect as an opportunity to heal the wound and grow. Berne (1964) sees regression as "scripts" people play. Martin sees the unspoken, unaware, unconscious expectations between partners as the covert regressive trigger (p. 61).

Regression in an intimate relationship appears to be a given. It seems that intimacy requires couples to develop an understanding and tolerance for each other's painful, frustrating impasses, and to allow the other to experience pain rather than manipulate or try to change the other to suit oneself. Regression, thus seen, is an opportunity for healing and growth rather than a repetitive nonproductive impasse. Two theoretical frames support the healing: "Unconditional positive acceptance" (Rogers, 1951), along with "paradoxical change" (Beisser, 1970). Paradoxical

change is "that change which occurs when one becomes what he is, not when he tries to become what he is not" (p. 77).

Wolf writes about man's imperfections:

> 'Man is born broken. He lives by mending. The grace of God is glue.' Kohut (1978, p. 287) has called this quotation from Eugene O'Neill's play, The Great God Brown, the most terse and expressive statement of the pathology of the modern self. Perhaps one could add that the most ubiquitous symptom of humanity's painful state is their incapacity to allow the needed experience of real and fulfilling intimacy. (p. 76)

Sex and Intimacy

A review of the literature on intimacy shows that it is dealing with psychological intimacy almost to the exclusion of sexual intimacy, although theorists all seem to agree that sexual intimacy is an important aspect of male-female relationships (Erikson, Fisher & Stricker, Smelser).

According to Plummer (1982), "Three main traditions of sex research have dominated inquiries into human sexuality" (p. 223). The first was introduced by Freud (1915), who examined the psychological development of patients by intensive probing into their childhood memories and unconscious, by means of free association and dreams. Freud

asserted a deterministic view, the instinctual theory, that human behavior is driven by the libido. The second epoch was led by Kinsey, Pomeroy, and Martins, and dealt with a sociological approach to sexual behavior, compiling statistics and generalizations through interviews and questionnaires. The third epoch followed Masters and Johnson's medical approach to sexual behavior, as they carefully studied the physiology of sexual arousal by means of controlled laboratory experimentation and observation.

Pioneers in sex research, Masters and Johnson (1966, 1970) prepared the field for further studies. The bulk of the other studies that followed deals with sexual dysfunction and its cure and survey-type studies of sexual behavior, but there is almost nothing in depth as to sex and intimacy.

After all that had been studied and said about the physiology of sexual behavior, Masters and Johnson (1975) wrote The Pleasure Bond, with a profound shift in their focus from physiology to psychology. Here they stress that the essence of intimate sex is arrived at through commitment, connection and touching.

> Touch is an end in itself. It is a primary form of communication, a silent voice that avoids the pitfall of words while expressing the feelings of the moment. It bridges the physical separateness from which no human

> being is spared, literally establishing a sense of solidarity between two individuals. (p. 238)
>
> This constitutes the wellspring of emotions from which sexuality flows. In reaching out spontaneously to communicate by touch as well as with words, a husband and wife reaffirm their trust in each other and renew their commitment. They draw on this emotional reservoir when one turns to the other with physical desire. (p. 239)

Masters and Johnson (1975) further state that the emotional connection through words, touching, and commitment all give a continuity of intimacy in and out of bed. The partners feel secure and certain. Thus each is aware that the other will respond and understand and is secure in the knowledge of his/her acceptance. "No matter how limited, a degree of erotic arousal may naturally be possible at that particular moment" (p. 239).

Masters and Johnson's view is contrary to popular belief in romantic love, eros, which equates passion with sexual intimacy. In Styles of Loving, Lasswell and Lobsnez (1980) state that romantic love is characterized by quick and intense response to physical appearance and physical attraction, and is expressed in sexual passion. "Research has shown that, in the most basic stages of sexual excitement, the more physically aroused a person is, the higher he or she rates a

partner as attractive and sexually receptive" (p. 120). But this is not a basis for ongoing sexual intimacy. Pheterson (1981) states that the "process of romantic love is mystified in our culture as the most precious of intimate norms" (p. 36).

Gagnon and Simon (1982) take a pragmatic view of sexual intimacy. They state:

> It is possible that we have assumed an important role for sexuality and the management of sexuality in the maintenance of marital bonds because we have assumed that sex itself is an important part of most people's lives. This may not be true. Particularly after the formation of the marital unit, it is possible that sex--both as a psychological reward and a physical outlet--declines in salience. It may become less important than alternative modes of gratification (work, children, security, constant affection--any or all may become most significant), or the weight of these alternative qualifications may minimize the effects of any sexual dissatisfaction. (p. 197)

Field, in her doctoral dissertation, concluded that "at least a minimum level of sexual satisfaction is positively related to a long-term successful marriage" (p. 37), but did not define minimum.

Clearly, in Masters and Johnson's (1975) writing, there is a significant tie between caring, commitment, touching, trust and sexual intimacy. It would appear that in long-term relationships, the quality of the total relationship is salient to the quality of sexual

intimacy. And, while sexual intimacy does not necessarily mean the ultimate of sexual excitation, it certainly can include that as well.

Although sex is an important aspect of the male-female relationship and a powerful and important aspect of bonding and intimacy, there is a paradox in that the perfect union of sexual passion may not necessarily reflect sexual intimacy, while minimum sexual adjustment may.

CHAPTER III

Method

Research Design

The problems of studying intimacy are reflected in the paucity of existing research. In reviewing the literature of the 1960's and 1970's, it is apparent that existing studies have been dominated by the application of survey methods related to satisfaction, adjustment, and happiness in marriage (Hicks & Platte 1970, Spanier & Lewis 1980).

No research was found that focused on men's positive or negative experience of intimacy, nor has there been a study to conceptualize intimacy. The studies of intimacy as a legitimate concern relevant to identity, growth and mental health have been a by-product of adult studies rather than studies with these concerns as their focus.

In addressing methodological approaches, Hancock elaborates on the problems in the existing psychological studies where there is a tendency to use "manipulation, quantification, and control" rather than to capture the significant meaning of the behavior. Furthermore, psychological studies heretofore have been dominated by male bias and have failed to take into consideration gender differences in studying women

(p. 33). This concept can also apply to the study of men.[4]

Qualitative Research

On collecting qualitative data, Lofland (1971) suggests that intensive interview of an unstructured nature be used. The objective of such an interview is to carry on a "guided conversation to enlist rich, detailed material that can be used in qualitative analysis" (p. 76). Spradley (1979), in similar vein, sees the ethnographic interviews as a series of "friendly conversations" which convey to the interviewee the message that (p. 58):

> 'I want to understand the world from your point of view. I want to know what you know in the way you know it. I want to understand the meaning of your experience, to walk in your shoes, to feel things as you feel them, to explain things as you explain them.' (p. 34)

A great deal of social science research has been directed toward the "task of testing formal theories" (Spradley, p. 11). One alternative to the use of formal theories, in a conscious effort to reduce preconceived cultural bias, is to develop theories grounded in empirical data of cultural description. Culture, as used in this research, refers to "the acquired knowledge that people use to interpret

experience and generate social behavior" (Spradley, p. 5). The concept of cultural description is called "grounded theory," and is the "discovery of theory from data" (Glasser & Strauss 1976, p. 1).

The process of qualitative research and ethnographic interview described by Spradley is similar to the social work interview, in that the data gathered must be based on the reality and perception of the interviewee, not that of the researcher or social worker. Yet, a research interview is different from a social work interview, in that the interview is often a one-time assignment to gather information, rather than to be therapeutic (Polansky 1960, p. 148). Kadushin states, "Interviewing is the most consistently and frequently employed social work technique," which makes social workers "particularly appropriate interviewers for studies in sensitive areas" (Polansky, p. 147).

The major purpose of exploratory studies is to discover ideas and hypotheses in order to generate further studies (Tripodi, Fellin, & Meyer 1969, p. 45). The vehicle of exploratory study is a framework which facilitates the gathering of sufficient information to make this discovery possible. "The process of discovery is not articulated sufficiently so that a researcher can follow a prescribed set of rules;

indeed, such a creative process does not necessarily follow orderly rules of logic" (Tripodi, et al., p. 45). Thus the researcher can have general, open-ended questions, yet may enter deeper into a dialogue to clarify meaning and further attempt to understand the reality of the person's world.

Since the study of intimacy is relatively an unexplored area of research, an exploratory research approach using a case study research design seemed particularly well suited.

Major Attributes of Intimacy

Intimacy, as defined in this study, is an affectionate, reciprocal bond between partners in a relationship that enhances individuation and interdependence, but allows for dependence and regression. There is reciprocal self-disclosure in expressing feelings, thoughts, and hard-to-talk-about issues in an open and honest way. There are conflicts and disagreements that may or may not be finally resolved, but are addressed. The sexual relationship, regardless of style and pattern, meets the minimum requirement of each of the individuals. Altogether, there is an experienced sense of good will, caring, and freedom between the couple. Intimacy is not static, it

is a process.[5] (This definition is a synthesis of the literature review. Sources are cited in the footnote.)

Perhaps no couples experience the conditions of this definition of intimacy all or even most of the time; however, like any abstraction, it partially describes reality some or most of the time.

The major dimensions of intimacy which were explored in interview are the following:

1. Personal history. "No one is immune from his past, and a life course has a historical accumulation of a person's responses and orientation" (Smelser, p. 23). The researcher was listening for the subject's life history on intimacy or the lack of it and how he accounted for his current capacity for intimacy. Answers to the following questions were sought: What do you remember as the major messages of intimacy from childhood and adolescence? What kind of behavior do you remember about intimacy from your parents? How did your father relate to you? How did your mother relate to you? How did your parents deal with conflicts? Did you learn about intimacy from sources other than your family? Who has influenced you the most as to your ways of relating intimately?

2. Reciprocal self-disclosure. Intimacy is interpersonal. For most adult Americans, marriage is

the relationship in which the highest levels of disclosure are expected. The spouse serves the role of confidante and best friend, someone whom one can trust more than anyone else (Derlega & Chaikin, p. 71). The researcher was listening for the following: How do you and your wife share your feelings and thoughts with each other? Under what conditions do you feel closest, most distant? What kinds of things are hard to talk about? How do you manage to talk about hard things? What is your most recent memorable experience in terms of closeness resulting from self-disclosure? What is your most recent memorable experience in terms of distance due to failed efforts to self-disclose? Do you share your fantasies, dreams, and secrets with your wife? How do you express your vulnerability?

3. Historical life phase--autonomy, dependence, and interdependence in relation to intimacy (Lynch, McMahon 1978). "We know little of what actually transpires in a successful marriage...particularly with regard to the psychological development of the individual. Marriage should not be viewed as people living in pairs, but rather as individuals living their lives and attempting to individuate" (McMahon 1978, p. 115). The researcher was listening for the development of the self in relation to autonomy, dependence, and

interdependence with the wife. How do you handle the need for both closeness and separateness in your marriage? Which need do you find the easiest to handle? How do you express these needs to your wife? Have you or your wife developed separate sets of friends, interests, or activities? Do you have very important friends outside the marriage? (Not meant to be sexual, yet an open-ended question.) How do you feel when you are alone? Has this changed over the course of the marriage? Do you see your marriage in phases?

4. Adaptive responses when life situation is challenged (Smelser, p. 23). The ability to hear, accept, absorb, resolve or not resolve interpersonal conflicts, hostility, and regression (Douvan, p. 26) was probed. The researcher was listening for the way in which subjects deal with specific conflicts of a transactional nature as well as conflicts rooted in "transference distortions caused by repetition compulsion" (McMahon 1978, p. 111).[6] How would you describe your methods of handling conflict in your marriage? Would you describe your most distressing conflict in the marriage? Was the conflict resolved? How did you deal with unresolved conflict? What were the feelings you were left with? Have you had these

feelings in other situations? Have you had counseling help of any kind to work out conflicts? Have you ever seriously thought about separating or divorcing? What was the process of resolving this conflict?

5. Affection and sexuality. Sexual adjustment is an important part of intimacy, but sexuality cannot be separated from emotional connection through words, touching and commitment (Masters & Johnson). The researcher was listening for the evolution of sexual life and its meaning. How would you describe your affectionate and sexual relationship with your wife? If there have been changes, who or what influenced the change? How do you feel about the change? How does your general relationship to your wife affect sex? How does sex affect your general relationship with your wife? What is your ideal image of sexual intimacy?

6. Self-description. Intimacy requires self-knowledge, since it is not possible to relate to another unless one can separate self from other (Ehrenberg); hence, the researcher was listening to the subject's general responses to the questions: How would you describe yourself in matters of intimacy and relationships? How have you changed during the marriage in your capacity and expression of intimacy? Who or what has influenced you the most in this regard?

What is your ideal image of intimacy?

Sample

The preliminary sampling of the couples was by referral, an accidental (volunteer) sample. Friends and colleagues of the researcher were contacted and referrals were requested of couples who met the following criteria:

(a) Couples must have been married seven years or more.

(b) Couples must at present have no known severe marital problems.

Questionnaires were sent to the wives and husbands. If the response to the questionnaires indicated the wife was satisfied with the quality of intimacy in the marriage, the husband was interviewed. It was explained to the couples that not all of those answering the questionnaires would necessarily be interviewed.

The number of subjects was six.

Seven years of marriage was chosen because it is "...generally accepted that more divorces occurred in the third year of marriage than any other--after the third year the divorce rate dropped steadily through the seventh year" (Hicks & Platt 1971, p. 72), and

there is another peak at seven years and a decline thereafter. It seems that, after the commitment to marriage, there is a first peak crisis of commitment at the third year, and a second crisis at the seventh year. Thus, seven years appeared to be a period long enough to have survived the courtship, and a period of sufficient duration for the couple to have explored and become aware of themselves and of each other in some depth, and to have renewed the commitment with a degree of conscious awareness of the issues in the relationship.

The nature of the research was fully disclosed to the subjects. Since some of the questions were of an intimate nature, utmost sensitivity and clinical acumen were used by the researcher in probing, so that the subjects would not experience undue stress. They appeared to be "at risk" according to the guidelines of the Department of Health, Education, and Welfare Policy on Protection of Human Subjects as adopted by the California Institute for Clinical Social Work. Participants were assured that names and details about them would be altered to preserve their personal and institutional anonymity in all reports of the research findings. In spite of this, every effort has been made to reveal the true inner meanings of the

subjects' reports.

Procedure

Upon referral, telephone contacts were made with the couples to explain the research purpose and procedure. A letter and a return envelope were mailed to the couples, along with (a) a questionnaire to the wives; (b) a demographic questionnaire to the husbands; and (c) an informed consent form to the two of them (see Appendices A and B).

The questionnaires returned by the wives were evaluated in order to select subjects whose wives expressed satisfaction with their husband's capacity for intimacy. Telephone calls were then made to the male subjects to arrange interviews. It was explained to the couples that not all those participating in answering the questionnaires would necessarily be interviewed. The subjects were interviewed at a designated place of their convenience, the researcher's only request being that there be privacy and no distractions during the interview.

Instrumentation

The husbands' questionnaire (see Appendix B) was designed to gather demographic information regarding

the subjects.

The interview schedule (see Appendix B) was developed to explore the major dimensions of intimacy as it is defined in this study. It was a semi-structured, open-ended series of questions constructed to elicit further dialogue between the researcher and subjects in order to clarify, to probe, and to understand the inner experiences of the subjects.

The interview schedule included general questions that emerged from the interview guide. The interview guide contained a list of issues that needed to be answered for the purpose of the research (Lofland). However, the answer to some questions emerged spontaneously in answer to other questions. The interview guide, in accordance with Lofland's suggestion (p. 85), was used to provide an inventory of things to talk about during the interview, and items were checked off as they were covered.

The time allotted for each interview was one and a half to two hours. The consent of the subjects was obtained for the use of a tape recorder to ensure accurate reporting. No one other than the researcher has listened to the tapes, and they were destroyed after the completion of this research project.

The instrument was tested through a pilot study of three subjects, using a two-hour interview for each. Three concerns were taken into consideration: (a) the fatigue factor of the lengthy interview, relative both to the interviewer and the interviewee; (b) the "at risk" factor of the subjects; and (c) the viability of the interview schedule. It was the researcher's opinion that the intensive interview could be conducted adequately without burdening the subjects or the interviewer. Probing was reduced to a minimum to control the "at risk" factor. Slight modifications were made to the interview schedule to increase its viability.

Analysis of the Data

The demographic questionnaire (Appendix B) was presented to identify the relevant characteristics of the sample.

The interview schedule (Appendix B) was based on the conceptual and the operational definitions of intimacy in this study (p.41).

In the analysis of an exploratory qualitative study there is a "constant comparative method of qualitative analysis" (Glasser & Strauss, pp. 101-105). Accordingly, the six taped interviews were analyzed to

describe variables, issues, or experiences which seemed to be common among the subjects. Any identifiable group patterns which suggested fundamental issues pertaining to male intimacy were presented for the formulation of hypothesis for further research. The researcher tried to separate personal, idiosyncratic experiences from the issues that seemed to be more general or more common to male intimacy per se. Because of the small size of the sample, the data was presented in case studies to maintain the continuity and integrity of each individual subject's experience. Any striking similarities and differences between members of the sample group, however, were examined.

Limitations of the Study

The study was limited to upper-middle-class adult males, with a sample of six. Consequently, the findings do not permit generalizations to other populations. Two considerations were made in choosing six subjects: (a) time, and (b) availability of subjects.

Each subject was to be interviewed for two hours,[7] and the analysis of the transcribed material demanded repeated examination and careful replay, thus requiring a lengthy time commitment.

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Each subject was to be interviewed for two hours,[7] and the analysis of the transcribed material demanded repeated examination and careful replay, thus requiring a lengthy time commitment.

The other consideration was the difficulty in locating cooperating subjects due both to the length of the interview and to its personal nature. The principle purpose, however, of limiting the size of the sample to six was that the study was exploratory, and it would have been impossible to gain access to the same highly personal, introspective material by other methods than personal interview. To approach a sample large enough to permit generalization would require other, less appropriate, methods of data collection. Further, a random sample would be extremely difficult or even impossible, as there is no known sampling frame of appropriate subjects to draw from.

One of the most difficult decisions was to limit the study to men. A study of both men and women would do justice to neither group. The difference in development and attitude between the genders is sufficiently great (Gilligan, Hancock, Lebe, Rubin) to warrant another, larger study which could encompass a contrast or comparison group design. Ultimately, to study reciprocal dynamics of intimacy, both husband and wife must be included. Given the paucity of information regarding men's capacity for intimacy as compared to women, this researcher felt it would be of primary importance to study men in their own right.

Questions regarding children were not asked because it was not the scope of this study.

CHAPTER IV

Findings

This exploratory study was conducted to discover how men experienced intimacy in marriage. The findings are presented in three sections. The first examines the results of sampling: (a) the procedure, (b) the wives' responses to the questionnaire, and (c) the demographic data of the subjects.

The second section focuses on the interviews: (a) the pilot study, (b) the interview structure, (c) the selection of the material from the interviews, and (d) the six case studies.

The third section analyzes the group findings in each of the six categories of the interview: (a) personal history, (b) reciprocal self-disclosure, (c) historical life phases of intimacy, (d) adaptive response to conflicts, (e) affectional/sexual relationship, and (f) self-description.

Section 1: Results of the Sampling

Procedure

The preliminary sample of the couples was obtained by referrals, an accidental (volunteer) sample. Friends and colleagues of the researcher referred couples who met the following criteria:

(a) Couples must have been married seven years or over.

(b) Couples must have no known severe marital problems.

When thirteen referrals had been received, telephone calls were made to each couple to explain the research project. In the course of telephoning, three couples declined to participate. Questionnaires were mailed to the ten couples who consented to participate. After reading the wives' questionnaire, two couples declined to participate on the grounds that the questions were "too personal."

Altogether, there were eight completed questionnaires returned from the wives. Out of the eight, two disqualified their husbands for the study because the response of the wives indicated that they felt their husband's capacity for intimacy was inadequate. The remaining six qualified their husbands because the responses of the wives indicated that they felt their husband's capacity for intimacy was adequate to excellent.

Wives' Response to the Questionnaire

The wives were asked six questions pertaining to the husband's capacity for intimacy. All except the

first question dealt with spousal relationship. That one question dealt with the spouse's capacity for intimacy with his family of origin. Comments and ratings were solicited on all questions and were all responded to. The rating scale ranged from excellent (1) to poor (6). Instruction was given to check (✓) the first and most spontaneous responses.

Noteworthy comments by wives were on their husband's general capacity for intimacy. One said, "Growing, and eagerness, willingness and interest in this area, I believe, are rare and unique. Most men I've met lack this interest. He is a man, however, and suffers from men's cultural conditioning and limitations. After all, he is not a woman." Another comment was, "I would say excellent, but there is always room for growth and a higher plateau one can strive for."

The lowest scoring subject was on the fringe of disqualifying, but the comments by his wife were significant, and he was selected on the strength of his phenomenal growth in his capacity for intimacy. The wife wrote: "You may think our marriage is rocky. At times I've felt that way, but believed it was no different from other marriages. My husband has changed so much for the better. I am satisfied and know that

it is getting better all the time."

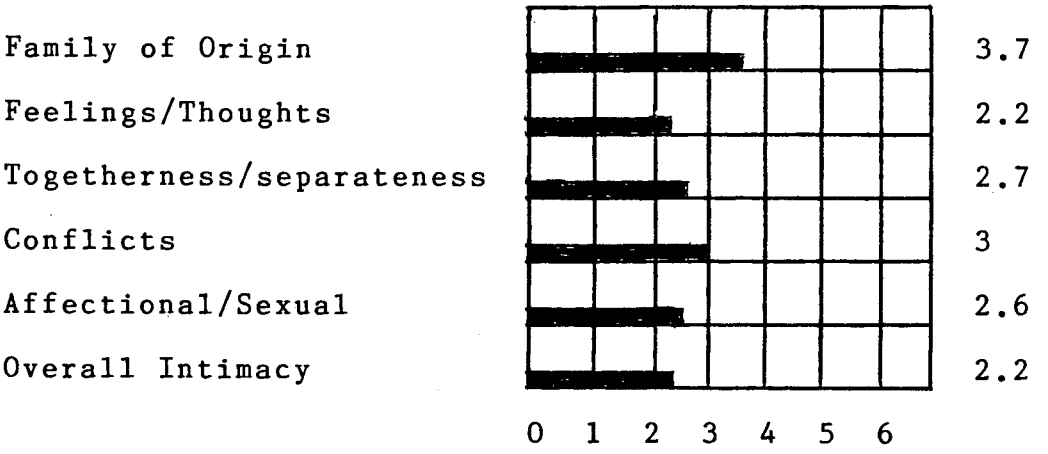
The rating of the wives is summarized in Tables I and II. To ensure anonymity, there is no identifying information in the charts. This research is not focused on congruences of responses between husbands and wives.

(See Tables I and II, Page 57)

Table I: Wives Rating of the Husband's Capacity for Intimacy

Wife	A	B	C	D	E	F
Family of Origin	2	4	2	4	6	4
Feelings/Thoughts	2	3	1	2	4	2
Togetherness/Separateness	2	2	2	2	4	4
Conflicts	1	4	1	4	5	2
Affectional/Sexual	1	2	2	1	3	2
Overall Intimacy	1	3	2	2	3	2
Mean Score	1.5	3	1.7	2.5	4.2	2.7

Table II: Mean Scores of the Six Wives



Rating Scale:

excellent	1
very good	2
good	3
adequate	4
inadequate	5
poor	6

Demographic Profile of the Subjects

The six subjects come from diverse socio-economic backgrounds. All are white, upper-middle-class professionals. One half of the subjects have technical backgrounds and one half have liberal arts backgrounds. Table III presents the demographic data of the subjects.

(See Table III, Page 59)

Table III: Subjects' Demographic Profile

Name	Age	Education	Occupation	Number of Marriages	Years Lived Together Prior to Marriage	Years of Marriage	Parents' Marital Status	Father's Education	Mother's Education	Siblings
Reilly	31	B.A.	Writer	1	2	10	Married	B.A.	B.A.	3
Smith	41	Ph.D.	Mathematician	1	6	7	Married	7th Grade	6th Grade	1
Brooks	43	B.A. Grad. Work	Small Business	2	3	10	Divorced	High School	High School	0
Goldman	51	Doctor of Jurisprudence	Attorney	2	0	19	Married	8th Grade	6th Grade	1
Allen	55	B.A.	Manager	1	0	33	Married	High School	8th Grade	5
Simon	56	Ph.D.	Research Psychologist	2	2	8	Married	High School	High School	1

(All names are fictitious.)

Section 2: Exploratory Qualitative Case Study

Pilot Study

The interview schedule was field tested by a pilot study of three volunteers. There were three concerns:

(a) The interviewer and interviewee's fatigue factor which might erode the consistency the interview schedule had attempted to control.

(b) The "at risk" factor of subjects.

(c) The viability of the interview schedule.

During the first interview, the fatigue factor was an issue both for the interviewer and the interviewee. Two factors may have caused this. Due to the interviewer's inexperience in handling this kind of interview, too many implicit questions may have been asked. Also, the interviewee had a strong tendency to meander, discussing issues not relevant to the study. Subsequently, it was made clear to each interviewee that all questions, unless otherwise stated, were about the subject's relationship with his wife. The two other interviews were more open-ended and fluid, and the fatigue factor was not a problem.

Since the subjects of this study were considered to be "at risk," according to the guidelines of the Department of Health, Education, and Welfare Policy on

Protection of Human Subjects, as adopted by the California Institute for Clinical Social Work, "all proper and prudent precaution" and clinical judgment were used throughout the interviews. Moreover, an introductory statement was made before asking the first question. It was, "You don't have to answer any questions you don't want to, and please feel free to terminate the interview at any time, if you wish." The probing by the researcher was used judiciously; usually, if the subject did not respond a second time, no further probing was attempted.

The interview schedule appeared viable in meeting the purpose of the research. There were, however, some minor corrections and deletions.

Interview Structure

Since the study of intimacy is relatively an unexplored area of research, an exploratory qualitative research approach with a case study design was chosen for this study.

This exploratory study began with areas of inquiry rather than a hypothesis to test. The six areas of inquiry are attributes of intimacy as defined in this study (see pp. 46-50). The Interview Schedule had six explicit questions and 34 implicit questions. All six

explicit questions were asked consistently. The implicit questions were frequently not asked because the subjects answered them spontaneously. To maintain uniformity and consistency in all interviews, efforts were made to check off the implicit questions as they were covered. At times, clarification and focusing were necessary to understand the meaning of the subject's statement. There was probing by the researcher; however, if the subject did not respond the second time, no further probing took place. Interventions were kept to a minimum to encourage the free and spontaneous flow of the subject's thought process. At all times, efforts were made by the researcher to use clinical judgment to conduct this sensitive, personal interview. Generally, the subjects were open and responsive and answered all questions voluntarily.

The demographic questionnaire and the couples' Informed Consent forms were returned prior to the interview.

Interviews were held at a specific place and time requested by the subjects. Two interviews were held at the subject's place of employment; two interviews were held in the researcher's office; two interviews were held in the subject's home. The only

request made by the researcher was that there be privacy and no distraction during the interview.

All subjects were interviewed for two hours and consented to the use of a tape recorder. One subject supplied a tape recorder because security regulations did not permit bringing outside tape recorders into his office.

At the end of the interview, the subjects were asked how they felt about the interview. Several subjects said they were surprised how quickly the time had gone, and wanted to continue the dialogue. One said he was eager to participate because he thought he would learn something more about himself and intimacy. Then he laughingly said, "It's good to talk freely to a third party like this." All subjects were positive about the experience and did not mind being interviewed for two hours. A few found insights while talking.

Although the interview schedule had an exhaustive list of questions to ask, the interview process was generally fluid, following the train of thought of the subjects. Many implicit questions were spontaneously answered. This factor may have had an impact on minimizing the fatigue factor for both subjects and researcher.

Selection of the Material from the Interviews

The tapes from the interviews were transcribed. Summarizing the transcriptions was a time-consuming critical task. Although the interview schedule was guided by organized themes, the interview method was open-ended and semi-structured to allow for considerable freedom for the subject to tell his story in his own way. Thus, a particular subject may have given examples of reciprocal self-disclosure in answering other questions. Information under each theme had to be organized to decipher the transcripts. The selection process was a search for particular themes as they were represented in the transcripts, while seeking similarities, differences, and evidence of contradictions in the data.

Unlike case history recordings in general, where there is a large content of condensed, summarized material, the case studies in this research have probably an abundance of quoted material. It was felt that the words of the subjects were vital to capture the essence, the soul, and the style of intimacy of each subject. All names have been changed to protect the identity of the subjects.

Case Study I: Mr. Reilly

Personal History

Mr. Reilly, age 31, grew up in an affluent home in New York. He felt his home life was a positive, warm, expressive environment.

> My mom's background was Italian and my dad's was Irish, and both seemed to be very outgoing. My father was explosive--when he let it out it was all over--and I was able to let it out as well, as I was growing up.

In describing his executive father's attitude, Mr. Reilly spoke of his having a "macho image." This meant there was no kissing, crying, or showing of feelings. Dad later became more physically affectionate with his boys. Weekly Sunday meetings were held with the whole family, allowing for common input and a sense of togetherness. "Kids were also encouraged to think and read."

Mr. Reilly has a fond memory of his father's expression of affection. He spoke of a time when he was three years old.

> One of my first memories was when Dad rubbed his beard on my face. He would do it until it hurt, and my mother would say, 'You're hurting the kid.' Dad probably thought this was a show of manly affection.

Mom related differently. Being the last of four boys, Mr. Reilly was Mom's boy.

> Mother always protected me against my older brothers because we were a combative family. Every now and then she would say, 'Don't be a pansy,' or 'Quit crying.' Whenever we would get hit, she would check for blood--no blood, you're not hurt. I always loved my mother. I loved both my parents.

His mother and father did talk of sexual matters, but the topic was uncomfortable. Mr. Reilly's learning on this subject came more from "kids on the street."

There was conflict between his parents. They argued, and yelling was a means of expressing anger.

> I didn't want to see two people I loved fighting, but it wasn't often, and I had the feeling after hearing the first few fights that they always seemed to be over the kids, never something over the two of them. As a matter of fact, my dad, from day one, always told us that we had better treat our mother nicely or we were going to be in deep trouble.

Reciprocal Self-disclosure

Mr. Reilly is a writer, and he and his wife have been married for ten years. Prior to that they lived together for two years. They had been "sweethearts" since they were 16 and 15.

His description of disclosure came across non-verbally more than verbally. His facial expression and body gestures became animated when he talked about his wife. In response to the question on how they shared

feelings and thoughts, he quipped:

> We don't have to worry about that. We have four children. We don't have time. Seriously, we do talk. It doesn't seem to me that Janet is a big toucher, now that I think about it. It is more on a talking and caring level. There is not a lot of hugging, I think because she is so used to me being the aggressor. We mostly just talk, about almost anything. I know Janet really well, but probably not as well as I think I do. With me, I just spit it all out, and it may come out one way yesterday and another way today, and tomorrow I don't know how it will come out. I can see how it can be disconcerting for other people, but it doesn't seem to bother Janet.

Their most distancing experience had been an affair of Mr. Reilly's when he became briefly involved with another woman.

> We have been making love for 16 years. We married when I was 21 and she was 20. Since we grew up together, I wonder if I have been too dependent on her, or if my growth has been slowed in some areas because I have been with one person so long. I guess in some ways that was what the affair was all about: to find out if I could be physically attractive to other women. Janet eventually found out about it, and when she asked me, I said, 'Yes.' I have a big hangup about being open and honest with my feelings and about what being honest means. In recent history I have figured out that probably nobody is completely honest, and there are shades of deception and deceit in everyone.

When Mr. Reilly was asked to describe one of his most recent memorable experiences of closeness, his response was:

> It is easy to think of the last time we had great sex, but I can take it beyond that. Seven months ago we had another baby, and that was a really close time. We were together through her labor for about twelve hours, just the two of us. We talked about stupid things on T.V. to pass the time, but it was an incredible, intimate time--our closest.

Regarding sharing vulnerabilities, Mr. Reilly said:

> I think we are very accepting of ourselves, and that is why the vulnerability question is hard to answer; we admit to being people, which means that we are vulnerable to a number of things. Except for the affair, I pretty much tell Janet everything.

Historical Life Phases of Intimacy

Mr. Reilly is reflective on the issue of autonomy, dependence, and interdependence, especially in view of his long experience with Janet, since they had grown up together. In describing his feelings of "togetherness," Mr. Reilly said:

> We try to create time where we can be together alone--go out to dinner or to a movie. We try to keep some semblance of knowing what is happening in each other's lives. Unfortunately, we run around so much and do so many things that when we are alone we discuss what has happened, not really getting into the essence of ourselves, but dealing more with mundane things of the world.

In regard to outside interests or people, Mr.

Reilly spoke of this as being a thorn in his side. He felt Janet had her own outside interests and friends, while he did not. He felt he lacked close friends, and said he had only two, Janet and his brother, George. "A friend is somebody who really understands you and loves you and you love them; it is a real coming together with another person. Janet is my number one person."

In reference to fantasies, secrets and dreams, Mr. Reilly said:

> When we were kids, Janet and I said we would never have a secret from each other. I used to be a big John Lennon fan, and I can remember when he got to know Yoko. That was their trip--that they were going to be one. I thought that would be great for Janet and me. We talked about it. Well, it is great, but there are certain things that are almost like God intended to be for oneself.
>
> Fantasies are just fantasies, and need not be shared. In a sense, the affair was a fantasy out of control, and that hurts. So, there are secrets and fantasies, but very few, and not in any way harmful to Janet.

To the question, "Have you ever seriously thought about separating or divorcing?" Mr. Reilly answered:

> Seriously, no. Whimsically, or off the top of my head, yes, because of what I said earlier. You think, 'I have been with this person so long, what would it be like not to be with her? Would I be able to manage my

own life?'

Mr. Reilly wishes he had more time alone. He enjoys the time to himself driving to and from work. "Life is so busy, I am wrapped up in that. I would like more time to deal with the interior, deeper things." He believes the change with autonomy will come when the baby is older and Janet gets a job. He realizes he will be more on his own and less taken care of when this happens, and she will realize herself and grow. He affirms Janet by saying:

> I firmly believe that Janet can do almost anything she sets her mind to do. She is an intelligent and good-looking lady. Of course, I'm probably going to carry pictures that make her look like a raving beauty. (Laughs and shows a picture he carries in his wallet.)

Adaptive Response to Conflicts

In speaking of conflict, Mr. Reilly began, "We don't have arguments that much. We see pretty much on an eye-to-eye basis on most issues, so there is not a lot of arguing." Their occasional disagreements are usually about the children or household chores.

> Janet will say, 'Jim, I know better because I have had a background in child psychology. My mother has worked in a preschool. But you don't believe me.' That's something that she will tell me repeatedly, because I will do things on an instinctive level. Maybe I let kids

> go out into the rain without a raincoat. I'll say, 'Well, the kids are going to learn to wear a coat,' but I won't say anything to them. Those things she will see as lack of good judgment or parenting. Or I hug my kids almost until they crack sometimes, and Janet tells me, 'Jim, you are going to drive that kid away, the way you hug him.' I do like my father did with me and his beard--I just hug them, rough.

Mr. Reilly describes a recent conflict between the two.

> Janet and I went to a seminar about parenting, a course that we hoped to teach at our church. I spoke for Janet in a group. She got up and left. She got mad as hell because I had no right to do that, but she was not speaking out in the group, and I was embarrassed for her, which is a dangerous thing. If you are going to feel embarrassed, feel embarrassed for yourself. She talked to me about this afterwards, and I understood.

The most distressing conflict Mr. and Mrs. Reilly have had was the affair.

> After I had told Janet about the affair, she said, 'What are we going to do?' That severed the tie, but it was a wrenching time. I think down deep there was never any doubt that I was a married man in love with my wife and with three children. I knew I was just being greedy. I had the best of both worlds for a little while. The funny thing is that it comes back. It is something that for maybe a brief time of fun or irresponsibility, I will continue to pay.

The Reillys entered couples therapy to deal with their crisis. For all practical purposes, the

issue is resolved, but Mr. Reilly says:

> It is something that is still festering, in a sense, and needs to have more work done. Sometimes it just takes time. Whether it will ever be resolved between us is unknown to me. It is not something I can force to be resolved. It seems to me at this point that it just has to be done at a natural pace.

A recurring theme of feelings for Mr. Reilly is anger.

> I get angry over Janet's repetition of how I should do the household chores, but it's a way of life. I just tell her 'I won't do the house work if you keep correcting me.' I think she wants everything to be as neat as the neighbor's house. She would like people to come in and say, 'What a nice, neat house.' With me, I would much rather somebody came in and said, 'Oooh, what a nice soul you have!' (Laughs) Janet kids me, and says, 'People don't say that. People look at your house and say, "Gee, you must have a nice soul because you sure have a clean house."'

Affectional/Sexual Relationship

Mr. Reilly, speaking of his sexual/affectional relation with Janet, said: "It is good. I have always wanted more sex, but it is a good relationship with the exclusion of that. I hug and kiss her a lot." He spoke of feeling at times as if he were not emotionally there for Janet.

> I try to caress her or try to make love

> to her, and that isn't what she needs. She needs to be loved and not to have somebody try to make love to her. I have read enough to know that love has a lot more to it than making love or having sex. It is a feeling of affection or concern for someone that goes a lot deeper.

For the Reillys, their sexual relationship has changed. He speaks of the pure act of sex as having gotten better. He went on, "I admit it has something to do with love, too. When you love somebody, sex will keep getting better." Mr. Reilly speaks of a time when they were 15 and 16 at Janet's home in the woods. "We were running around with no clothes, having the time of our lives. Now it is not like that every day, but there certainly are nights that are comparable, if not better."

Since he and Janet get along well in general, Mr. Reilly feels that sex is seldom affected by conflict. But with four children and chores, it's not always easy for them to be affectionate, sexual, or supportive.

> The night I told her that I was having an affair she didn't know where she wanted to sleep. So she slept in the living room, and then came back later that night and said she saw me sleeping like a baby and wanted to hit me and say, 'How can you sleep like that?' That has come up once or maybe twice in our relationship.
>
> I place a high value on being the best person I can, and hopefully, by doing this interview, I will be better

at intimacy with Janet.

Self-description

Mr. Reilly described himself in the following manner:

> I think I'm very intimate with Janet, but I wish I had changed more. I am certain that I have changed, but I don't think it has been a major change. Sometimes I wonder if I've gotten more or less intimate. Certainly, I have gotten more distracted with outside influences. Maybe I'm still very much the 16-year-old boy that Janet met. Janet definitely has had the most influence in regard to change and intimacy. She is the best thing I ever had. I guess we must have been born under a four-leaf clover, or something. It's all been pretty lucky.

Case Study II: Mr. Smith

Personal History

Mr. Smith, age 41, came from a "lower class" family. His father belonged to the American Legion and was frequently out with the boys playing poker and drinking. He described his family relations as follows:

> Intimacy between my parents was non-existent. I suppose there was life behind the bedroom door, but I have no data. My parents did not openly communicate. One Christmas we needed money, so my mother borrowed it and created a wonderful Christmas for us. My father was against borrowing, but my mother did it anyway.
>
> My mother usually told my father what was wrong. He would get quiet and leave, staying all day on Saturdays; probably feeling guilty for 'not doing it right.' My mother programmed that aspect, feeling guilty.
>
> My father's behavior toward me is a sore point in my life. He never demonstrated love. If I kissed him, he'd kiss me, but he never initiated affectionate behavior. I learned about kissing from my mother. She would kiss me good night, and then say, 'Kiss your father good night.' My father has never discussed any issues with me, whether it be my schooling, career, or anything. I finally initiated a discussion with him ten years ago. I wanted to test my hypothesis that my father did not love me. As it turned out, that was not my father's intended message.

Regarding his mother, Mr. Smith stated:

> We were very, very close. We would sit out on the front lawn and discuss anything and everything, except sex. She loved me and cared about me a great deal.

Mr. Smith did not learn about intimacy from any other sources while growing up. He came from a "low-income, low-cultural background," and all those around him were like his parents--sometimes worse. His mother had the most influence on his way of relating intimately.

Reciprocal Self-disclosure

Mr. Smith is a mathematician. He and Mrs. Smith lived together for six years, and have been married for seven. They share their thoughts and feelings in a variety of ways. One of Mr. Smith's favorite scenarios is as follows:

> I like to lie in bed at night and talk quietly for hours, sometimes from 10:00 p.m. to 3:00 a.m. Just share, tell stories, make plans, whatever. Sometimes we might even argue. But it's wonderful--no interruptions. For me these times are very close and intimate.

Another way they share their thoughts and feelings is to structure time. "Let's meet to talk after the kids are in bed," or on Saturday, "Let's plan for dinner and talk." In this way they capture time of their own from a busy life.

Mr. Smith says there are lots of times when he feels either a closeness or distance between them, but these are not major things, but more like the rhythm of their life. On the whole, they are more close than apart.

Mr. Smith feels distance when they have not made love for over a week and when Amy's mother is visiting, their sex life stops. He finally told Amy what was troubling him--that he felt ignored and hurt. She was more than willing to change the situation. "I believe Amy is close to her mother, and when she is visiting, that's where she gets her intimacy needs met." The distancing feelings usually come when Mr. Smith feels neglected.

Mr. Smith claims he is not yet "good at talking about hard-to-talk-about things." One of these is the discipline of the children. He does not approve of the way she spanks the kids and doesn't know how to talk to her without interjecting a tone of disapproval. "I haven't held a conversation about this without accusing her of wrongdoing, yet I know she is a terrific mother. Mrs. Smith usually gets mad.

Mr. Smith feels vulnerable when he feels unloved.

> I am pretty open about sharing my vulnerabilities, and they are related to feeling distant. I often feel afraid

> she is not going to relate to what I am saying, or will become harsh. Sometimes she does, but most of the time she comes through. On the positive side, there is the example of her mother's visit. On the negative side, something happened this morning on the phone. She asked me to make a call and gave me the number on a slip. She needed the slip, so I gave it back to her. Then it dawned on me that I forgot to get the slip back so I could make the call. She was curt and short because she was busy trying to get Judy to school. Then she said, 'I left it on the newspaper.' Well, I had no way of knowing she did. To top it, she said, impatiently, 'I'll get it,' and gave me the number, saying 'I can't be responsible for your forgetting.' I felt unloved, and momentarily very vulnerable.

Mr. Smith talks to his wife about his dreams and career plans. He has no secrets that he is consciously withholding. Regarding fantasy, he says, "I don't tell her I am sexually attracted to someone walking down the street."

Historical Life Phases of Intimacy

Mr. Smith described his marriage as having three phases. The first stage was the "crazy days." "Both of us were glued together. We wanted lots of time together." As they got to know each other better, they found their tastes overlapped. "We didn't always want to see the same movies, but we did. We chose not to do things separately, because our psychological makeup

couldn't do it." Now in the third phase, they are very comfortable and loving with each other.

> You might say love matured from puppy love. It may not be as intense, but it's workable and good. We can predict our fights; we can predict our lovemaking; we know each other well. It was not until two years ago that we could go to a show separately and enjoy ourselves.

Mr. Smith finds time alone by getting up a couple of hours before other family members. This is his time to do what he wants. "I give up my sleep to jog or to do yoga."

> Yoga helps me to look inward to myself and listen to my body. I choose to let it happen by creating a space. Running works in a similar way. I just love the open air, the beauty of the trees, and feeling my presence in the universe--separate but whole sort of thing. As far back as I can remember, I enjoyed my alone time, riding my bike, reading at the library, and just thinking.
>
> As I said before, we do see movies together, but there are some differences in the tastes Amy and I have. I like science fiction. She loves a folksy-type movie, like Sally Fields in Places in the Heart, so we see these separately.

Mr. Smith does not often see friends alone. He says,

> I don't have close male friends, and that is a sore point. My friends are not intimate friends with whom I can share deep thoughts and feelings. My most intimate friend is my wife. I've come to believe women are much easier and more intimate to talk to.

Adaptive Response to Conflicts

Mr. Smith is aware of those subjects which are sensitive, but has not been able to find a better way to process conflicts or to find resolutions than the one he uses.

> I have modeled myself after my mother in terms of initiating more conversations about conflictual matters. As a rule, my wife does not initiate a conversation even when she senses something is wrong. On the other hand, I am like my father in that I am sensitive to Amy's complaints. For example, if she says, 'We are spending too much money,' I take it I am. I don't like the way she initiates--it's not an open conversation. I feel I am to blame. I can't be responsible for something she wants!

The most distressing conflict for Mr. Smith is not a memory of one outstanding incident, but a general pattern that is upsetting to him. He describes this as:

> I don't feel Amy is willing to give up something for me. She is rigid and I usually have to give in. For instance, I am responsible for getting the children (ages three and six) dressed in the morning. I usually have to look around and around to find their shoes. I said to Amy, 'What I would like from you is, put the shoes in the closet.' Her attitude was that it was one more thing she would be responsible for, and she was unwilling to do it. This angers me. There is no reciprocity. When she has held a similar conversation with me, I have given up things. I am a T.V. addict. When the T.V. is on, I am completely absorbed and won't hear anyone. I have

> given up T.V., and seldom watch it since Amy's grievance. She wanted my time.

One of their major conflicts had to do with finance. Mrs. Smith wanted to buy a house he thought might be beyond their means. She accused him of dragging his feet, and assailed his family as non-aggressive. He says, "This was too big of an issue for me to give in. We consulted a friend in real estate who figured it out with a computer. Once I knew logically we could afford the house, it was O.K."

Mr. Smith reflected further, and explained that in spite of his unresolved grievances he is very appreciative and aware to what extent Amy gives to him and the family. "Her Valentine's party for the family was incredible." Mrs. Smith made a special cake, had a dinner that had everyone's favorite dish, and had unique and individual little gifts. "It just occurs to me now that if she thought it was a demand, she wouldn't do it. On her own she gives a great deal."

Mr. and Mrs. Smith were in a couple's communication class several years back. The members of the class have since formed a leaderless couples group, which they attend regularly. The class has helped them to talk more openly, but, "I am not that much smarter about resolving certain issues."

Mr. Smith has never seriously considered separation or divorce. He sees conflicts as "normal" in life, and is willing to deal with them. "We may slam doors, each separate in our own world in the house, but we have never separated."

Affectional/Sexual Relationship

Mr. Smith described his sexual relation as follows:

> It is good to excellent, but not enough. My wife's desire is less by a factor of three. However, she will willingly be involved because she realizes my desires. Her sexual appetite has much to do with how she may be hassled with daily pressures or troubles.
>
> My idea is that affection and sex go hand in hand. I enjoy the physical closeness, the tenderness between us, aside from the actual consumation of the sex act. For me, lying on the bed together half a day Saturday, or going on vacation without the kids is wonderful, close time. On vacations we are much more physical and less intellectual. We really have a good time being together.

Other affectionate ties involve connection between the two stemming from common memories. For instance, if Mrs. Smith says "York," he knows, oh, yes, those cobble stones. "The sharing of common knowledge and experiences means a lot to me."

Mr. and Mrs. Smith's sexual relationship certainly

has changed in terms of frequency and intensity since their earlier years, especially after the birth of two children. However, the sexual relationship is still satisfying for Mr. Smith in quality, if not in frequency. On the other hand, affectionate ties are stronger because of the common pool of growing experiences and knowledge they share.

Self-description

Mr. Smith describes himself as having been an intimate, self-aware, introspective person from childhood. "I always wanted to know what is."

> I consider myself a successfully intimate person who can sustain a relationship. I am a very committed person. I show my feelings readily, I cry, I get angry, I show affection. I am very much in touch with my emotions. I believe I developed the capacity to be in touch early in life. I am not really sure how, but even as a kid I would listen to what was going on in my head, and feel where I was, even when I was six or seven.

One of the major impacts toward further self-examination came through pure accident in his graduate school years. His roommate was involved with a woman who was a follower of the guru Raj Neesh, and he was invited to a meeting. There he was introduced to Book IV of Spinoza's Ethics. It gave him a tool to "handle his emotions."

Up to this point, I was an intellectual being, working on my Ph.D. I was acutely aware of my emotions, but didn't have the tool to use them. I knew I was alive when I felt love, anger, or sex. I learned that emotions have approximate causes which lead to a life path. Up to that point I felt, and that was it.

This conversation with you has made me reflect more about intimacy. I would like Amy to hear me out and to initiate hearing me out. I need avenues to create that, but unless I formulate what I need, I am passive, not truly alive.

My skills at dealing with highly emotional situations aren't developed yet, but I do think we have a very good intimate relationship. On a scale of one to five, five being the highest, I would rate it four. I think Amy would say the same. She is my most and only intimate friend.

Case Study III: Mr. Brooks

Personal History

Mr. Brooks is 43 years old. Since his parents divorced soon after he was born, he lived with his mother and her common-law husband until he was three. He then moved in with two great aunts, until one of them died when he was 16. At that time he moved back with his mother. Because his mother was a Catholic, she never remarried, but continued to live with her common-law husband whom Mr. Brooks considers his stepfather. In describing his childhood and adolescent relationships, Mr. Brooks says:

> My mother and I get along very well. I spent my high school years with her, and then went off to college. My mother doesn't hassle me and I don't hassle her. She's like a friend. She speaks of affection; she hugs. We talk on the phone an average of once a week. It's not exactly intimate conversation, but just, "How're you doing? What's happening?", things like that. My stepfather is no big talker. He's there and he expresses affection, but he is kind of shy, somewhat reticent, retiring.
>
> Whatever models I have for intimacy came later in my life. When I was growing up I felt secure. I felt that especially with my two aunts where I was the only child--the only one they were caring for. I could pretty much control them and get what I wanted. As a kid, I could do just about anything I wanted. I felt loved by my aunts. I felt loved by my mother. When I look back, it seems like a lot of freedom and happiness, and it was a good time being a kid.

Mr. Brooks remembers that his two aunts fought, but it was always a foregone conclusion who was going to win. The younger one resisted somewhat, and then always gave in.

Right after college, Mr. Brooks married his first wife. They joined the Peace Corps, and six weeks later were assigned to Syria. This marriage ended in divorce.

He feels he learned about intimacy in his adult life through his experience in communal living, and as a trainer of groups.

> As a result of my experiences, I conceptualize ways of relating and act them out to the extent that I create my own values. I really started growing in the sense that I began reshaping my thinking about the definition of the world.

Reciprocal Self-disclosure

Mr. and Mrs. Brooks have been married for ten years, and lived together for several years prior to marriage. He runs a small business. They share their thoughts and feelings readily at all levels. They met in the Peace Corps commune, where there were "constant examining of feelings ad nauseum."

> Mary, having had the group experience, has really done quite a bit of work of her own. We both came to accept a certain set of

> values about communication. One of them is that, basically, at all costs, you're honest, but it doesn't mean you're always honest. For instance, Mary sometimes doesn't want me to tell her about the things that happened at the store that are bad news. She says, 'I don't need the bad news. You handle it unless you need to share it with me.' And so we have some kinds of things we don't share just because we agree life is more peaceful if we don't. If something is really important to me I'll come to Mary and say, 'Listen, I want the truth. This is important. Tell me now.' That's usually how we begin solving a problem between us, although in the ebb and flow of our relationship there aren't too many things that are threatening. There are just the minor annoyances of daily living. To me the values of intimacy are more a state of mind, like I know I am intimate with Mary, that there is that total access if I want it, in terms of sharing or expressing my needs. I might not always get my needs filled, but I won't have any problem expressing them. If they don't get filled, I won't have any problem bitching about it, either.

Mr. Brooks feels that he and Mary know each other pretty well. When they talk, he says, it is not so much disclosing something deep that has been hidden a long time as it is expressing a current need or want. He feels he has no problem talking to Mary about anything. "When I have a feeling of anything being wrong between us, there is an extremely short period of time between having the feeling and expressing it." One of the training interventions helped him see openness as non-threatening. He reports:

> One of the interventions that we used was freaky at first, but since I went through it many times, it became second nature. It was called the 'public interview.' In this exercise, you come before the group and they can ask you any question about anything whatsoever, and you are required to answer the question honestly or terminate the interview and sit down. It was an exercise that really was a powerful one. It left people feeling completely drained. It also left one on an extreme high, because all the devils they thought existed in being honest and sharing some of their fears about themselves were kind of dissipated. As the trainer, I went through it as well. After you've been in 30 or 40 of these, there aren't too many questions that you haven't been asked and have not answered. So you say to yourself, 'What's the big deal about that?'

When asked about sharing secrets, Mr. Brooks said, "There are no secrets left to share." On the subject of fantasies, he remarks, laughing, "Fantasies are something--some she likes to hear, some she doesn't!" A query concerning his vulnerability brought a more serious response.

> The first thing I would try to do is come in contact within myself with what it is that I'm afraid of. For example, if I'm feeling something that might be like jealousy, I'll try to track that down, because jealousy is kind of an amorphous word. It doesn't tell you anything. Okay, that must mean I'm feeling threatened. What is threatened? Then I'll try to come in contact with that. When I feel I have, I'll share that with Mary. I'll say, 'Listen, I'm feeling very ill at ease about what's going on here, and the reason is that

> I think this actually might pose a threat to our relationship, and I sure as hell don't want to lose you, Lady.' Usually an accomodation will be made once Mary understands where my feelings are coming from.

Historical Life Phases of Intimacy

Mr. and Mrs. Brooks have gone through several phases in their life together. The first phase was the togetherness phase, where "there was no room for others."

Another phase came after their marriage. Ten years ago they married because they decided to have children. "When we started our nuclear family, both of us breathed a sigh of relief. I said, 'This is a nice change.'"

Mr. and Mrs. Brooks both have separate lives. Mary goes out with her friends. He finds time for himself after Mary goes to bed about ten. "If I don't get space for myself, I tend to get grumpy." Togetherness is harder now because of the logistics of life with children, work, and household chores.

> Usually I get home before Mary, and I'll pick up the kids, do the shopping, and probably make the dinner. Then when Mary comes home, we'll go spend maybe fifteen minutes or sometimes a half hour in the bedroom, depending on the mood. Neither of us drinks, but both of us occasionally smoke grass. We'll smoke grass and relax

> together and that's an important time for us. That's our together time.

Mr. Brooks does not have strong needs for friends. He says, "I am kind of a loner." Yet he has friends, really close friends, from the Peace Corps days. Mary has separate friends and activities.

The most current phase is Mary's noticeable autonomy through finding a job outside their business and expanding her career goals. "She is much more independent and exciting."

Adaptive Response to Conflicts

Mr. and Mrs. Brooks do not have serious conflicts. He describes himself as pretty even in temperament, and he does not have intense ups and downs. The kinds of things they fight about are mundane, everyday things.

> Sometimes when we fight, even when I am mad, it is almost like wrestling on T.V.-- to a large extent, a charade. I am expressing feelings.
>
> To some degree, Mary and I are at two extremes. Mary is much neater than I. I throw my clothes in the corner and I don't care. She will come home to a messy house and say 'I can't relax until we pick this up.' And I'll say, 'Well, pick it up if you want.'
>
> There are maybe seven or eight fights that will be ongoing the rest of our lives. Neither of us take them very seriously. It's like, if I'm feeling mean and nasty and I had a

> bad day, I'll just vent it in this way. And she, too, has her little ways of venting.

One of the most recent distressing periods has been the change in financial setup. This caused a great deal of adjustment. They had worked as "merchants" together for six years, but due to financial setbacks in business, Mrs. Brooks took an outside job.

> Mary did it like a true high achiever. She did all the right things and got the job she wanted. We literally had to restructure our days, the time we had together. She came home as from any new job, always tense and under stress because it's a new learning. So there was very little of her energy left for me. That was a real strain for us. I guess it was ongoing for two or three months. I would snap at her, 'You know, it used to be important to you to make time for us.' We did a lot of back and forth, but it was like a pendulum that you just give a swing; over a period of time it stabilizes. There are probably still some things we have to clean up, but we are getting back to having time for each other. I'm seeing that new strength in her, and there is more excitement for me.

Mr. Brooks claims he does not have recurring pain. "I can't recall feeling that heavily about anything between us in recent memory. In the commune days we did have an open relationship and that caused each other pain, and so we had endless house meetings. But that's no longer the case."

Regarding separation or divorce, Mr. Brooks simply said, "Never!"

Mr. and Mrs. Brooks have not been in counseling.

> We received a lot of counseling by the wayside, some while we lived in communes. But we never sought out 'counseling.' One year ago we went to a marriage enrichment three-day weekend because we were feeling a need for a break. We both like this type of thing--to take inventory of the things we had assumed. It was good to hear about commitment and love again. It's good to leave children behind and just focus on ourselves.
>
> I may still look at another woman and be attracted to her now, but that's not what love is. I think I know what love is. It's not the passion that comes from seeing a person for the first time. I don't think temptation will come my way, because Mary's just a beautiful person; you don't find people like her, so you hang on.

There are also the children, who bring out affection, bonding, and support. When their son had major heart surgery, it was a most stressful time for both of them. "I could hardly hand my son to the surgeon." The experience tightened their bonds of affection. Mr. Brooks feels one cannot erase that kind of bonding. "Even if I grow old and fat and ugly, Mary will still love me because she can see beyond that, and it's the same for me."

Affectional/Sexual Relationship

Mr. and Mrs. Brooks have a good sexual life. He is "more demanding" sexually in terms of frequency than she. But she is "quite accomodating."

> We get it on two to five times a week. If it's five times, she is depressed. If it's two times, I am tense. We manage generally to find a balance. When she wants it, she is really enthusiastic. I prefer these times.

Mr. Brooks feels he and his wife get along readily, and generally there are not issues pertaining to sex or affection. Their sexual relationship has changed since the onset of their meeting.

> Earlier, she was absolutely insatiable. I felt the same. I know people mistake passion for love. When passion dissipates, they feel they no longer love. What I had earlier for Mary was the passion of mystery. Ten years ago I would have opted for passion. Now I am more appreciative of the true essence of the relationship. The high passion comes back now and then, like on the enrichment weekend.

Self-description

Mr. Brooks' self-description of his intimacy is intertwined with his attachment to Mary.

> When I was undergoing training, I took the motivation-acquisition test. My profile was pretty high on need for achievement, and very, very high on need for power, but I would have to go off the scale to find my need for affiliation. My need

for affiliation still isn't very high, and my need for power has certainly mellowed over the years. (Laughs) Although my general need for affiliation is not very high, my need for affiliation with Mary is very high. We would like to grow old together. I think I'm a marrying sort of person. I would feel alone, probably basically unhappy, if I weren't married.

Mary is the beneficiary of my mistakes in my first marriage. I had a need for power, and pushed my first wife around in a sense of taking over. Basically, we did what I wanted. It took me some time to realize my part. My first wife was bitter about our relationship, so I really took inventory, and told myself that if I truly wanted a loving relationship with Mary, I had better change. Living in a commune is a constant open feedback system. Whether you like it or not, you'll get it. The nice thing about it is that you can see your own faults, and then you can accept them or change them. People become fully known with their warts and beauty marks.

I have not changed much in the last ten years. I have a very strong attachment to Mary and very little need for others. I'm pretty self-contained, except for needing Mary. I cannot conceive of being with a better woman than Mary. I don't think I could trust anyone as much as I trust her. Trust is one of the illusive words. I am not saying I trust her to be faithful--although I think I can trust her... (Laughs) She can't keep a secret worth beans. But I trust her heart, that her spirit is loving.

Case Study IV: Mr. Goldman

Personal History

Mr. Goldman, age 51, is the son of Russian immigrants. His father, a blue collar worker, worked odd shifts at two jobs and was never home. His mother was a homemaker. As Mr. Goldman recalls, his parents did not show affection, nor did they fight.

> We just all lived together. Father essentially neglected his family except for bringing home the bread. I never got a chance to know my father, because he died when I was 17. I was not mature enough to try to get to know him. My mother showed affection by taking care of me. She would make food that I loved, make sure I wore decent clothes, and was conscious about how I represented her to the world. I really can't say I learned about intimacy from my parents.

Mr. Goldman felt a close bond with his sister, who was two years older, and a "bookworm." They shared common interests and talked a lot. She was influential in his life.

Despite his mother's threats, Mr. Goldman left home and married at 19. The marriage ended in divorce after eight years. He felt his wife was the first person from whom he learned about love and affection. "I left because I was too immature to appreciate her," he says. "I was going to graduate school, and felt the need for something more." Then, pensively, he states,

"She died of cancer a couple of years after the divorce. I have nothing but appreciation for her. She definitely has been an important woman in my life." This realization came about in recent years through his experience in EST.

Reciprocal Self-disclosure

Mr. Goldman was a college teacher and is now an attorney. He and his current wife, Helen, have been married 19 years. Helen is a commercial artist.

All of their children are out of the home.

Mr. Goldman thinks of "sharing thoughts and feelings" as a sharing of intellectual interests as well as personal feelings. He has read feminist books such as Women's Room, Fear of Flying, Feminine Mystique, and many others in order to understand Helen's point of view.

> Learning, books, ideas, and discussions are my highs in life. It's vital to me for closeness that Helen and I can relate intellectually, and we do. I believe she has a higher I.Q. than I have. She has a much better capacity to flow and be creative. I excell in questioning and analyzing. We complement each other and have enormous respect for each other. I know psychologists talk about feelings as intimate. I enjoy that aspect of intimacy, but for me intellectual wrestling is as important as sex.
>
> We also share feelings. Just last night we took a walk after dinner, and the sunset

> was magnificent. We were holding hands, and she just squeezed mine. I felt very close to her--nothing extraordinary, but meaningful to me.

Confrontation, Mr. Goldman believes, creates distance for him in the relationship.

> I feel distant when Helen confronts me. She is a strong woman and is big on the women's movement. The very quality I respect about her becomes a pain in the ass when I am the issue. I have very little tolerance if I am confronted with wrongdoing, especially if in my mind I didn't do anything terribly wrong. I tend to get stuck up there in my head and can be obstinate. An example of this would be the time I had gone ahead and made plans for us for the weekend, going to a play Helen wanted to see with friends we both enjoy. She had a deadline for work that very day and was angry that I did not not consult her. She says, 'We've talked about your making unilateral decisions before, and you knew my feelings. I don't understand. Your action tells me you don't take me seriously.' I say, 'But I was thinking about you. It's a play you wanted to see.' She says, 'That's not the point. You promised me you would discuss things that involve the both of us. Why didn't you call me?' Her voice gets intense and that gets to me. I withdraw. It sounds rather trivial, but this is a familiar distancing scene.

These are the issues that Mr. Goldman finds hard to talk about. He feels he has improved, because he can now see how she feels, but he doesn't see how she could construe his action as unloving.

Mr. Goldman acknowledges that one of his biggest shortcomings is the inability to allow himself to be

vulnerable.

> It's only in recent years that I am in touch with this part of me. I had a mother who didn't speak English, who was fearful. I felt I had to learn on my own and fend for myself emotionally. Somehow I often am not in touch with my vulnerable feelings, or if I am, I try to circumvent them. So if I am hurt, I have a hard time, of course, expressing them directly.

Mr. Goldman's most devastating experience has been Helen's involvement with her co-worker, "platonic, of course," he says. She has worked with Jim off and on, and talked openly about him and about their joint venture. At first it didn't bother Mr. Goldman, but the more she talked about Jim and their work, the more he felt as though they were intellectually and artistically intimate.

> I felt betrayed, like he was taking over a territory I had no power over. I became jealous, but hid this because it seemed so stupid. I was embarrassed a bit. Helen, on top of it, said 'I would never do anything without consulting you.'
>
> This statement possessed me. All this openness is a pain. Retrospectively, she says, 'It was an intellectual statement.' Deep inside, I trust Helen. She is direct and open. This is one of the qualities I admire and love. Anyway, after months of suffering inside--well, not totally; sometimes I would get caught up, but most of the time I was my normal self--when I finally told her how I was feeling, she was surprised. She said, 'I know you've been acting a bit strange off and on, but when I asked you, vou told me it was that court case that was giving you headaches.'

> After talking more about it, she said, 'If it bothers you and hurts you that much, I could work with someone else.' As I said, Helen's big on women's rights, but when I am down and out, she really comes through. I felt so close; you don't know how much. I feel foolish telling you this. This kind of thing I usually don't get caught up in. I really won't want Helen to give up any creative work for me.
>
> Helen was moved by my confession. She said, 'I never knew this about you. You always seem so sure of yourself. Sometimes there is a glimpse, but never like this. It makes you more human, David. I love you, Sweetie,' and she hugged me very, very tenderly. So my closest and most distancing experience both stem from issues within me. Thinking about it now, what a paradox!

Mr. Goldman has no secrets from Helen, and while he shares some fantasies with her, he says he doesn't share them all.

Historical Life Phases of Intimacy

Mr. Goldman described life phases lucidly. The first phase was an intense period of togetherness, when it was "almost suffocating, but pleasurable." The second phase was when Helen was very dependent on him and he was more separate, preoccupied with school and making a living. In the more recent phase, he says, "I am more dependent on Helen, and she is more involved in creative efforts."

When we were first married, we just didn't

spend much time without each other. You know how it is, intense. Well, when the kids were born, we had to go out separately if we wanted some change from the routine, because we didn't have much money for baby sitters. She would go out with her women friends, and I would meet with my friends. We have, to this day, friends we get together with as couples and separate friends, and it works out. I even have women friends I may meet for lunch on occasion, but Helen doesn't seem to mind. I have three important friends I keep in close touch with; we've been friends for decades. I don't make friends easily, but I keep the ones I enjoy. I have a colleague I meet once a week, and we talk about law as well as personal things.

Helen was at home while the kids were pre-school, and she worked part time after they entered school. During that period she was more dependent on me, but somewhere in the late 60's she became an activist in the women's movement and was a leader in 'consciousness raising.' She gradually became more independent and I, more dependent. She has always been verbal and assertive, so I thought she didn't need all that consciousness raising. But it's been good for both of us. So I say-- I think. I have had to learn to adapt to her reality. She says, 'I understand your reality better than you do mine, so...' And that's probably true. I didn't always read books she recommended, but I do now, willingly. There is a lot of work in an egalitarian marriage. (Laughs) We have more confrontations, now, but at the same time we are closer.

Mr. Goldman believes that the fact that he is established in his practice and can be more home-oriented contributes to their present relationship. He says that he really enjoys not working as much as

working, now. Helen, on the other hand, has a lot of freedom for the first time, since the children are gone. He is proud of her development, and makes it a point not to interfere with her creativity. When she is excited about her work, he feels "just as excited."

He has more time alone, now, since Helen occasionally goes to workshops on weekends. "I can't say I thrive on these," he says. "I miss her, but I manage. Friends and my own interests help me pass the time. Fair is fair."

Adaptive Response to Conflicts

Mr. Goldman believes his inability to deal with conflicts, especially those pertaining to him personally, is his "Achilles' heel."

> I can listen to almost any kind of conflict and come up with a good solution. I can be empathic, too. Helen says, 'For a man, you are a good listener, and people can really cry on your shoulder. That's probably why you're a good attorney.' But when it comes to Helen's complaints or anger about me, I am limited. Helen accuses me of being defensive and like a rock. I sure don't feel like I am, but that's how it is. There is some truth there, I know. I don't think we have that many conflicts, though, that interfere with our good feelings.
>
> The most devastating conflict for me was, as I said earlier, when I thought Helen was involved with her co-worker. It became such an irrational threat, I couldn't bring myself to talk about it. I was angry and

> would get upset about other things. I made life miserable for us. In between upsets, I would do things for Helen, thinking I would win her over. She would say, 'Why are you being so nice?' I really felt possessed and crazy at times. I have a hard time acknowledging my own anger.

Mr. Goldman goes back to his childhood in an effort to account for his inability to face angry confrontations. Since his father was not around, his mother had no one to fight with but the children. "I shouldn't call it fight, but she would cry or yell when she was upset, and I would feel helpless." He didn't know how to respond, so he just didn't say anything. "My mother was a great one to 'guiltify' me and tried to possess me. I could never get angry because she suffered in the new world. I do feel sympathetic toward her, too."

Mr. and Mrs. Goldman are both EST graduates, and have taken a series of EST workshops. About seven years ago they took the communications workshop. Mr. Goldman believes it has helped him look at himself and his ways of communicating.

Seriously considering separating or divorcing has not occurred to Mr. Goldman.

> Helen's the best thing that has happened to me. There is a vitality, spontaneous aliveness, intellectual sharpness, and a tenderness that's difficult to find in one person. I know I would never find anyone

more suitable for me than Helen, and I love her very deeply.

Affectional/Sexual Relationship

Mr. Goldman described his affectional/sexual relationship as excellent. He sees himself as a touchy person in and out of bed. He says,

> Helen's friends envy her because I am very demonstrative. It's easy for me to be like that with her. Helen says that's why she married me, and I say to her that I thought you married me for my intellectual brilliance. She jokes, 'No, for your carnal knowledge.'
>
> We have always been most compatible sexually, and as the years have gone by we have become much freer. Helen has changed in this way. I've been married before and have consorted with my share of women in between marriages, so I had a head start. Men complain about not enough, but I don't have that kind of grievance. Sex and affection are a very important part of our marriage, and even after conflicts we are still able to make connections in bed. We don't solve the conflict, but we still are able to love each other in bed.

Self-description

Mr. Goldman offers the following description of himself:

> I am a loving, caring person. I would do almost anything for Helen or my good friends. I am not just verbal in my caring, but am an activist. I believe I reach out, like making plans for Helen and me. It backfires at times. (Laughs)

I also seek out my friends. If I don't hear from them, I call them. I am very good relating one to one, but do have difficulties in group situations.

I believe I have gone through a metamorphosis of some kind since my first marriage, my divorce, and my first wife's death. Dating a lot of women and reading women's literature, have all helped me understand something about the other sex and relationships. I value relationships.

As for myself, I know I have limitations, and I struggle.

Case Study V: Mr. Allen

Personal History

Mr. Allen, age 55, was raised in the midwest in a religious, Lutheran, working class family.

In recalling his childhood, Mr. Allen reported a lack of intimacy between his parents. His father was a stern, no-nonsense religious man, who spent most of his time working. When not working, he was involved in church and community activities, helping people. He was highly thought of by others, but had little time for his family. "The only contacts we had were when he had to reprimand me or tell me what to do." Mr. Allen remembers his mother as a passive, compliant woman who was dominated by his father and his extended family, who lived nearby. He also remembers she cried a lot.

"I did not learn about intimacy from my family or any other sources while I was growing up." The parents communicated very little, and family structure revolved around roles--"what you're supposed to do." During his adolescence, he was busy participating in organized activities and gaining recognition for his achievements.

Reciprocal Self-disclosure

Mr. and Mrs. Allen have been married 33 years and

have four children, all adults, who are out of the house. Mr. Allen was graduated from college with a B.S., and is successfully employed as a manager at an aerospace company. Mrs. Allen is self-employed as an art dealer.

Mr. Allen's most memorable experience of closeness, due to self-disclosure, came through participation for three days in marriage encounter in 1975. He told his story unashamedly, shedding tears as he recalled this peak experience:

> We were each told to introduce our wife by describing her. Everybody spoke of his wife in terms of good housekeeper, terrific cook, good mother, wonderful woman, but nothing about the inner experiences. During the process, we learned to get in touch with our inner experiences, our feelings and sensations. We had to describe these. We began with ten minutes of answering a list of questions in writing and then talking to our mates about it for ten minutes. The last day we were instructed to do the same for 90 minutes. I said to myself, 'There is no way I can write about Joan for 90 minutes. What the heck am I supposed to write?' One question was, 'Why do you want to keep living?' I didn't have to think. I knew. It was the first time I have really thought in depth about how important Joan is and how much she means to me. As I was writing, my eyes got teary. I stopped thinking about the time; I just had so much to say. I wrote and wrote until I was told to stop. During the next 90 minutes, we talked and talked. We cried and embraced.

Mr. Allen sees himself as vulnerable to

domineering people. He was never able to please his father, in spite of his accomplishments in sports and in school. Complaints and criticisms, he feels, are attacks on him. He sees himself as having a hard time sharing his vulnerability, especially under "fire." "I know I am too sensitive," he admits. Consequently, responding to Mrs. Allen's complaints about him becomes one of the hard-to-talk-about things. His lack of self-disclosure results in his experiencing a feeling of distance.

> When Joan is upset and complains, my automatic response is to shut down and not talk. I know it's an old fear of not living up to my father's expectations and not knowing what to do. Now I still get that feeling of old fears, not knowing what to do, But at my best, I can tell her what's going on inside of me, and that seems to break that old cycle-- but not always.

Mr. Allen does not have secrets. He does not fantasize. "My dream is to grow old with Joan."

Historical Life Phases of Intimacy

His first real exposure to warmth and love came from the family of his wife, Joan. "Her parents made me feel wanted, important, loved and welcomed." He married her, but "married her family, too."

During the first ten years of marriage, there was

a slow deterioration of the relationship. He was working compulsively and attending various organizational meetings. "Joan complained, 'You're never at home,' but I was completely insensitive to her needs. Dad left no room for Mom. I did the same." As a result, Joan spent a lot of time with her family.

His first glimpse of self-revelation came when his six-year-old daughter asked, while he was deeply engrossed in reading the newspaper, "Daddy, why are you home?" This remark jolted him. "I was just like my father, busy outside being a do-gooder, but never at home. I never wanted to be like my father. God forbid--the last thing I want to do! I was trying to give my children what my father didn't give me, but I simply didn't know how."

At age ten, his son John was having learning difficulties at school. Upon the recommendation of the school psychologist, the family consulted a psychiatrist. As a result, Mr. Allen was in individual therapy for five months. He learned that his fathering was impacting John adversely. "There I learned, again, more about how I was no different from my father, and I became very upset about the tenacity of my heritage."

Mr. Allen's self-awareness began with his daughter's innocent indictment and brief period of

therapy, but the experiences did not affect the marital relationship. The major thrust toward intimacy began when the couple participated in marriage encounter. During the last five years, Mr. Allen has taken a series of management training workshops, classes leading to introspection, and participated, with Mrs. Allen, in a couples communications workshop. He feels that these classes "have all helped me grow and learn how to be close." Currently they are in an ongoing marriage encounter group.

Mr. Allen does not give much thought to separateness. He believes his preoccupation with tasks during the first 10 to 15 years of marriage separated him from Joan. Now he is consciously aware that he would like to spend as much time as possible with her. When the youngest son left home, Joan said, "Now it's just you and me, Babe." "It was a second chance to be together. The first time around, I didn't know how. I just love being with her now. It's not in my thinking that I want to do something different." Mrs. Allen has separate friends and activities, and he does not mind if she engages in these activities. He primarily socializes with "couples we know."

As for being alone, Mr. Allen said, reflectively, "I have fears of being alone for any lengthy time, like

a week. I don't know why I am fearful."

Adaptive Response to Conflicts

Mr. Allen recalls an early childhood memory where his father was yelling at his mother and hit her. "I couldn't see him hit her, but I heard it clearly, like turning up the sound of the T.V. I can't stand loud, domineering people. I am just like my mother." Seemingly, when demands are made in a loud voice (or one he perceives as demanding and loud), he feels helpless.

Mr. Allen is clearly aware of the lingering childhood pain and the impasse it creates within him. He recalls that the most distressing conflict in the marriage was an unwanted pregnancy. Mrs. Allen felt she could not handle a fourth child and was depressed.

> I didn't know what to do. That was a time you didn't think about abortion. She blamed me for the pregnancy. I didn't know how to solve the dilemma, but was trying in my own way to make her feel better by doing things for her. But I was totally unable to be sensitive to her feelings. Joan has not completely forgiven me for those months and years. We have talked about it over and over. My sense is she still can't let go completely. I own up to my insensitivity, but I don't know how to undo the past. I try to understand her hurt feelings and try to accept them. It's easier for me now because I don't blame myself so much.

> The pattern of handling conflicts has been that she yells and I shut down. She gets louder because she can't stand my withdrawal. I don't know what to do, so I feel I am to blame; I placate her or withdraw. If I placate her she gets angrier because she wants a real response. I don't know how to argue or stand up for myself. Now, at least we are sensitive to each other. She knows I can't handle outbursts, so she has toned down. I try my best to tell her what I feel and think. She is backing off, now. I don't experience her like gangbusters, so it's easier. One thing I have always been good at is touching. I learned this from comforting my mother when she cried. I've tried that with Joan, but it does not work. She pushes me away. She wants to deal with the issue. She has forced me now to deal with issues and not to sweep them under the rug.

Mr. Allen has never thought of separating or divorcing. "I am from the old school. It's not even a choice. But even if I had a choice, I want to be married to Joan."

Affectional/Sexual Relationship

Mr. Allen describes himself as a caring person:

> Sex, at one time when I was younger, was a physical thing for me. Now sex and affection are intertwined, and touching plays an important part in our ties. Sex does not play a prominent role in our lives, but we do have more affection and sex when we are getting along than when we are having problems. We don't talk about sex. I wouldn't know how to talk about it with anyone, or Joan. Altogether, I am very content in our affection for each other.

Self-description

Mr. Allen describes himself as having a late start in learning how to be intimate, but there is definitely a satisfaction and self-acceptance about this. He says,

> I consider myself reasonably good in maintaining a relationship. I am a pleaser, and this is important to me, especially in relation to Joan. I try willingly to take her into consideration. I feel I am now more able to be open, more trusting and able to communicate. It is a shame that I have wasted years not knowing how to get close to Joan, but I feel very good about the present. I am looking forward to further strengthening my relationship to Joan, for my relationship with her is more important to me than anything else.

Case Study VI: Mr. Simon

Personal History

Mr. Simon, age 56, came from a middle-class family living on the east coast. His father was a small construction contractor. Regarding a message of intimacy, Mr. Simon explained that he believes that "Intimacy is people communicating without walls." He felt that his background did not provide him with a sense of intimacy. "I didn't see or hear any full, total dialogue in my family. Everybody was in their own space."

Although his parents did not show outward signs of affection, it was clear to him that they loved and cared about him and his brother. His parents periodically fought about trivia. His mother would say to his father, "You didn't charge enough," and father would reply, "Stupid woman, what do you know about this?" He says his father was a sexist.

Father did not show affection toward him until Mr. Simon was well into middle age. Then he started to hug and kiss him. Mother was protective and took "good care of us." Mr. Simon feels rueful about the lack of physical display of affection. He said, "My mother would, once a year or so, wash my hair with olive oil and comb it out carefully. It was a wonderful feeling

to have that contact. But those were the only ones..."

A memorable incident of intimacy came from an outside source when he was twelve. He and his girl cousin went to a movie. She held his hand. It was the first deliberate effort of anyone to show an outward sign of affection. "It meant a lot to me."

In general, Mr. Simon's way was not to make waves, and he tried to win parental approval. He was a "good boy." His brother, in contrast, was "non-conforming and rebellious."

Reciprocal Self-disclosure

Mr. Simon is a research psychologist. He and Hana have been married for eight years. Prior to this, they lived together for a couple of years. Mr. and Mrs. Simon communicate their thoughts and feelings with each other by talking openly. They talk a great deal about their relationship. Mr. Simon feels closest to Hana when he feels heard and understood. He feels distant when he is not heard and is judged critically. He also distances himself by "shutting down feelings and intellectualizing."

He gives the following as an example of closeness:

> For years Hana has been after me to get more in touch with my feelings, and I have been thinking about the nature of

> intimacy. A few nights ago I really felt close to her. During the next day I felt warm and thought about her. Then I realized it was a spiritual connection, and more, which I had felt. I had been focusing so much on my feelings, to get in touch with them, I didn't realize that for me closest moments are spiritual, intellectual and emotional, a blend of all these. I explained this to Hana, and I felt she accepted it and understood my makeup better.

An example of distance is a time when Hana is not accessible because of her complete involvement with her adult son by a previous marriage. Hana's son is an alcoholic, and there is an ongoing entanglement and conflict between mother and son. "For a while I could go along and support her, but after a while it gets old."

Only in the last five years has Mr. Simon been progressively able to talk about difficult issues: his needs. The fear of creating negative feelings are very real, and it is an ongoing struggle. At one time, he could not initiate a grievance about Hana's exessive involvement with her son. Rather he would be the rock she could lean on and vent. "I just couldn't say, 'I don't like your giving all of your attention to your son.' I felt too guilty. After all, I could rationally understand how she must feel."

Regarding dreams, fantasies and secrets, Mr. Simon

states he and Hana often share their dreams when they get up in the morning or when they take a walk together. He does not fantasize much any more. "I am pretty content. There are no secrets any more. Our relationship has evolved to the point where, in the last few years, there is a complete openness."

Historical Life Phases of Intimacy

Mr. Simon sees his marriage as evolving through various phases. In the early phase of their relationship:

> It was nothing but illusion and projection. Oh my God, what a wonderful woman, no flaws, no problems, no neuroses. (Laughs heartily.) There was some disillusion about my illusion. Now I could say, 'I realize now how neurotic you were in our earlier years, Hana.' I would attribute all of our problems to me. I realize she is not perfect and has her own sets of problems and I have mine.

Mr. Simon then went on to explain at length how well they are doing now. When asked what went on in between, there was a momentary pause, and then he said, "Good question." He slowly related the following:

> Historically, there are two modes of behavior that characterize me. One is to be mechanical and not to be in touch with myself. The other one is to seek approval by being charming and soothing over rough spots. I lived the two modes in my second phase. There were a series

> of external crises: Hana's parents' death, trouble with her son, and illnesses. I couldn't say, 'What about me?' I just smiled and helped her out and bridged over the troubled waters. At that juncture, I had an extended affair. Rather than taking a stormy stand, I would straddle and waffle. I really don't know how I came to my decision, but I terminated my affair and made a commitment to Hana on my own. Then, after the fact, I told her about what had taken place and my desire for a renewed commitment.
>
> Following the disclosure, there were a couple of years of storm and hail. She would say, 'I don't know if I could ever trust you.' It was a gradual process of rebuilding trust. In retrospect, the disclosure of the affair was the greatest act of trust I had engaged in, saying something I didn't have to say.

During this period, one of his male friends was going through a similar experience and had decided to make a commitment to his wife. He said, "You know what we have done? We have made a commitment for the rest of our lives not to fuck another woman." (Laughs)

> I didn't express it to myself in those terms, but that is exactly what I have done and didn't mind it. Part of it, I believe, was acting out my adolescence, stuff I had never done.

It's been over six years since the affair, and the relationship has gradually been built to a close, trusting relationship.

> If you were to ask me how long I have been married, I would say six months. That's how new and wonderful it's been feeling. There is a lot of vigor and

> energy in our marriage. I believe it's because we are able to say whatever is happening with us to each other. You never know what you may discover, but it's exciting.

Mr. and Mrs. Simon have separate sets of friends and activities. Mr. Simon is content with the separate time he has. They have more problems having time together since both are actively involved in their careers. Consequently, they make it a point to plan a weekend away together each month. Mr. Simon enjoys his alone time, although he feels he does not have enough of it.

Adaptive Response to Conflicts

In the past, Mr. Simon's style of handling conflicts had been "soothing or avoidance." Now the principal style is collaboration. "We try not to go into a bargaining mode until we both feel we have talked about our feelings." On minor issues, he tries to get settlement by suggesting they flip a coin. "Hana agonizes even about minor issues, since she seems hung up on making the right decision. So I try to set time limits on our discussion of minor issues."

The most distressing conflict in the marriage was the turmoil that was created over the disclosure of the affair. Other conflictual issues revolve around Hana's

son. Mr. Simon happily told me his new mode of behavior. Hana has stopped supporting her son, but has been paying for his therapy. Hana, her son, and the therapist met, and she came home completely distraught. "They ganged up on me," she said.

> My initial response was, 'Not again,' but instead I decided to actively get involved. I offered to support her by going to the next session. I called her son to get his permission, but he did not return my calls. So I just went along with Hana to the session. I thought he should face the consequence of his avoidance. I had to shift my schedule to support her, but it was worth it. She really appreciated my action. This is something new in my intimacy--to be pro-active.

Mr. Simon sees his most recurring pain as a tearful, sad feeling he does not always understand. He does not get into this condition very often, but at this point he does not have the ability to understand his inner process except to feel whatever it is.

Mr. and Mrs. Simon have had extensive therapy of various kinds--individual, couples, and body therapy (bio-energetic, Reichian). He says, "It's hard to say when we haven't been in therapy of some kind." Most of the therapy has taken place individually, and "has given us a lot of tools to develop ourselves and our relationship." Shortly after the affair, they had gone for conjoint therapy with two therapists. Each time

they went about three times and quit, because they felt they were more sophisticated than the therapist.

Mr. Simon did think about divorce during the affair, but has not considered it for the past five years.

Affectional/Sexual Relationship

Mr. and Mrs. Simon both are very affectionate.

> There is a lot of kissing, touching, and hugging. We don't have any problems expressing affection. Sexually, it isn't as free-flowing. I am not clear what the dynamics are. Part of me is tempted to say fear of intimacy, but that is too theoretical. Perhaps it's my fear of rejection or outcome. It could be work or anything. I could leave my physical senses and let my thoughts wander away from Hana. Would it be satisfying? That thought alone finishes me. Hana has had aches, pains, and lack of energy off and on through the marriage, and that has not helped the situation. I would like it more frequently; we may have intercourse every two weeks. When we do it, it's often very good. Other times it's not so terrific because one of us may be preoccupied.

Mr. Simon went on to explain further that earlier in his marriage he would have responded that sex was good.

> It was because I was concerned primarily with my physical satisfaction. I know better. I would say our sexual life is getting better. We are more fully aware and present, and it's more total. There is a potential for our sex life to be

excellent. I am optimistic.

Self-description

Mr. Simon described the onset of the development of his capacity for intimacy by using a metaphor of a deep freezer chest.

> I had frozen myself for 35 years in a deep freezer chest. In the last five years, I have been thawing out rapidly. While I was in the chest, I felt that I didn't have as many problems as I have now. I was functioning well, and people could see me and interact with me, but I was operating on automatic-- I was an automaton. Since I am so well conditioned, I have to be watchful of myself so I don't slip back. My big job is to stay conscious.

While he was married the first time, he entered a master's program in psychology. There he discovered a new world. His women classmates were alive and involved. Before entering the program, he was feeling a sense of despair, a deadness in his life, marriage, and career (mathmatician). "Is this all there is to life?" The twentieth anniversary of his marriage was coming up. He just could not celebrate it. "I leaped out of the freezer, leaped out of my career, and I leaped out of my marriage. I left my hometown back east and came west."

He sees himself presently as an intimate, relating

person.

> I feel I have been intimate with you. (Looks earnestly and directly at the researcher.) I have fewer things to hide and feel good about myself. My first priority in life is to deepen my relationship with Hana. She has been the most influential person in my life in helping me to become an intimate person. She is intuitive, has a great ability to be herself and let her feelings go. She is not afraid to confront me.

His quest is to heighten and enhance his consciousness and find ways to increase his capacity to connect.

> I've asked myself, what is intimacy all about? I think it is a spiritual quest of breaking down the walls among people. How can we be united? How can we be part of the universe? The most elementary aspect is intimacy: it is a building block for a spiritual journey.

Section 3: Group Findings

This section discusses what was learned from the case study of six married men. Each explicit question asked in the interview is discussed below under separate headings, analyzing variables, issues, and experiences.

Personal History

"No one is immune from his past, and a life course has a historical accumulation of a person's responses and orientation" (Smelser, p. 23).

To the question, "What do you remember as the major messages of intimacy from childhood and adolescence?" all subjects except one clearly declared they had not learned intimacy from their family of origin. Five subjects described intimacy, or the lack of it, in either/or polarities. Absence of intimacy, to them, meant lack of communication, lack of demonstrative affection, and unresolved conflicts. For five of the subjects, a relationship with the father was non-existent, or existed only through negative nexus. "He told me what to do or reprimanded me." Only two subjects described relations with the mother as intimate. Nevertheless, they all seem to have had a more personal connection with the mother in terms of

physical care.

Only one subject acknowledged learning something about love and intimacy from his family. His parents were warm and expressed both negative and positive feelings. His family's socio-economic background was different from the others interviewed in that both parents were college graduates and his home was an affluent one. He was exposed to books and ideas and was encouraged to think and reflect. He said, "I had the luxury of not living in a survival mode."

Another subject also saw himself as self-aware from childhood. He is the only college graduate among his blood ties and has a Ph.D. He did not learn intimacy from the relationship between his parents, but he was close to his mother and there was a lot of sharing.

Five subjects categorically stated they did not learn anything about intimacy from their families of origin. In the sample of men, the lack of intimacy in their backgrounds was the norm. This feeling may be due to the frontier cultural heritage of emphasis on hard work and survival (Douvan, Levinger), rather than the unique family backgrounds of the subjects. As one subject said, "All those around me were like my parents, sometimes worse." These subjects learned to

become intimate in adult life. They described their ability to communicate and to show affection as related to contemporary norms of openness and honesty.

Psychoanalytic theory, founded by Freud, espoused a deterministic view of personality. He believed the formative years of life had profound influence on adult personality, which was essentially a reenactment of the childhood unconscious and conflicts. However, he failed to take adult learning and change into account. The question, then, is what were the variables responsible for planting the seeds for change in the subjects' adult life? The variables, it seems, were both external and internal.

The external variables were institutionally structured experiences: encounter groups, EST, communication workships, marriage encounter, and personal therapy. These experiences exposed the subjects to another way of thinking, feeling, and behaving. The actual change took place in increments, but the external precipitants were dramatic and sharp. The subjects' experiences were not isolated ones; they continued to seek the means to support their concepts of a new consciousness.

The internal variables took a bit more probing to discover, and at times were not clear. They appeared

to have something to do with the capacity for self-analysis. Two subjects were introspective from childhood. One subject experienced a gradual metamorphosis in self-reflection from early to mid-adulthood. One subject became self-reflective through personal despair in midlife. One subject gathered isolated bits and pieces of insight through decades, and gradually became ready to view himself differently from before. One subject's internal precipitant was unclear. All subjects had developed a dialectical capacity to integrate the external and internal in varying degrees.

Reciprocal Self-disclosure

Intimacy is interpersonal. For most Americans, marriage is the relationship in which the highest levels of disclosure are expected. The spouse serves the role of confidante and best friend, someone we can trust more than anyone else (Darlega & Chaikin, p. 71).

To the question, "How do you and your wife share your thoughts and feelings with each other?" all subjects thought they generally communicated well with their spouses, and placed a high value on openly sharing thoughts and feelings.

The subjects identified several facets of

closeness: emotional intimacy (6), intellectual intimacy (2), sexual intimacy (6), and spiritual intimacy (1). Emotional closeness was expressed in simple gestures, such as "She squeezed my hand"; a feeling of being understood through verbal communication, "She heard me"; or was even reflected in a moment of silence. Generally there were shared pools of experiences and memories of joy, grief, and crisis that brought them closer. Intellectual intimacy was experienced in shared ideas, values, and "intellectual wrestling." Spiritual intimacy was expressed in ultimate concerns and the meaning of life. (Sexual intimacy is described under Affectional/Sexual Relationships.) Emotional and sexual intimacy were described by all subjects as important. Five subjects made no reference to problems related to growing closeness, such as fears of engulfment or loss of self. However, one subject, the youngest, did express concern over possible loss of self.

For four subjects, emotional distancing, vulnerability, and "hard-talk-about things" were intertwined. The most frequently mentioned area of distancing was their wives' complaints directed toward the subjects with "upset," "anger," "intensity," or "yelling." The subjects generally responded with

feelings of inadequacy, guilt, or helplessness and felt attacked and vulnerable. The most extreme reaction of the subjects was to "shut down and withdraw." Few found new ways to handle themselves. "I try my best to tell her what I feel."

Vulnerability was linked to those subjects who had difficulty discussing feelings. A few subjects had difficulty expressing their wants, needs, and such feelings as jealousy, anger, and insecurity. Although it is generally believed that sharing painful feelings helps to cement relationships, the subjects felt "stupid" or "embarrassed" when expressing feelings about themselves which they felt were not congruent with their self-image.

Two subjects had no problems with vulnerability and hard-to-talk-about things, and communicated readily. One said, "I let it out." Another said, "There is a very short period between having the feeling and expressing it."

None of the subjects had secrets at this time, but two had had affairs and had experienced periods of secrecy. Two subjects had no fantasies. Four subjects were careful not to disclose fantasies that would hurt their wives. Sharing dreams was not an issue.

Historical Life Phases of Intimacy

"We know little of what actually transpires in a successful marriage...particularly with regard to the psychological development of the individual" (McMahon 1978, p. 115) pertaining to autonomy, dependence and interdependence in relation to the wife.

The questions under the rubric, "How do you handle the need for both closeness and separateness in your marriage?" needed the most probing. The theoretical frame came from object relations and psychoanalysis in reference to separation and individuation. A crucial implicit question was, "Do you see phases in your marriage?"

The initial phase was characterized by loss of personal boundary, idealization, and ardor expressed in sexual activity. It was described succinctly by five of the subjects as "to be one," "glued together," "no room for others," "almost suffocating but pleasurable," and as "nothing but illusions and projections. Oh, my God, what a wonderful woman!" One subject described his experience as "moved by her warmth and love, and that of her family."

The second phase was not as clearly defined. There were individual differences among the subjects in the time span needed to reach a second transition. The

difference may have had something to do with the subject's strength of individuation prior to the marriage and the subject's age, which might reflect the stage of development in life.

The second phase was described in a myriad of ways, reflecting separation-individuation and ambivalence. With those with small children, the locus of separation revolved around the children, whether they were conflicts over discipline, chores, or time spent together. For all subjects, it was also a period where illusions and projection were breaking down and they were learning more realistically about the other person. One said, "I realized she was not perfect and had her own sets of problems, and I had mine." Two subjects had affairs during this phase. It appeared that one of the reasons the affair took place was an effort to individuate and separate. As one said, "We grew up together, and when that happens you wonder if you have been too dependent on the other person, and that it has slowed down your own growth."

One subject described the first 15 years of marriage as gradual deterioration. He led a separate life outside the home, engrossed in work and activities; but it seemed to be a pseudo-separation through role behavior, and he lacked consciousness of

self. His capacity for intimacy began only five years ago, and his cycle of married life was different from the rest.

The third phase was described as intimacy-building, where there was a renewed commitment, knowing the strengths and weaknesses of their wives, but at the same time valuing the importance of the relationship. During this period there was a clearer consciousness of self and others. The reappearance of each partner as an individual became central in maintaining their relationship. One said, "We could go to a show separately and enjoy ourselves." Another observed, "I'm seeing that new strength in her, and there is more excitement for me." Conflicts were handled and risks taken; for example, "There is a lot of vigor and energy in our marriage; I believe it's because we are able to discuss whatever is happening to us." "We have more confrontations now, but at the same time we are closer." Rituals and traditions were established and a comfortable predictability developed in the relationships.

Two subjects implied that their wives were more dependent in the earlier years of marriage. Two subjects said they were more dependent on their wives now for companionship, since in their earlier years

they were more focused on developing their careers.

Five subjects enjoyed time alone, but did not enjoy the absence of their spouse if prolonged, for instance, for as long as a week. Two subjects were fearful of alone time, but managed to handle it.

Separateness and closeness manifested in friendships and activities were not major issues. All subjects accepted their wives' separate activities. One subject had a problem with his wife's relationship with her co-worker. Friendships were quite limited. Only one subject had a number of close male or female friends. Two subjects had only one close male friend, and for one it was his brother. Two subjects did not have any close friends. One subject had friends prior to his marriage, but claimed his needs for friends were now all met by his wife and family. One subject longed for close friendships, but found it difficult to find men who would relate on a personal level. Thus, friendship among these subjects was not as "rare" or non-existent as in other findings (Fasteau, Levinson, Lowenthal).

Separation-individuation is a complex psychological issue, and to describe the subject's married life in three phases becomes an over-simplification. There were notable variations in the

age of marriage (from 21 to 48); in the length of marriage (from 8 to 33 years); in the time span spent in each phase; and in the different and unique developmental trajectories in adulthood. The summary of the phases, therefore, was made through statements or inferred from the responses of the subjects.

Adaptive Response to Conflicts

The ability to hear, accept, absorb, resolve or not to resolve interpersonal conflicts, hostility and regression (Douvan, p. 26) was probed.

To the question, "How would you describe your methods of handling conflict in your marriage?" all subjects responded that there was not a lot of conflict or argument in the marriage. Two subjects were comfortable with the predictable themes of the little arguments they have, and so were their wives. One said, "I'll just vent it in this way, and she, too, has her little ways of venting." However, important issues were seriously considered and worked out through efforts to understand each other's position, and settled through negotiation or accomodation.

Four subjects acknowledged that there were problems dealing with conflicts, but each had considerable insight into his own process and was

working to improve his part. It also became evident that there was commonality in the process between partners. Each husband basically wanted to please his wife, and when she became upset or angry, he felt responsible, helpless, and inadequate. Their modus operandi was to placate or withdraw. Neither mode worked. One subject said, "She has forced me now to deal with issues and not sweep them under the carpet. Now I try to say what I think and feel." Concomitantly, a wife's comment on the questionnaire stated, "Improving; he is willing to be there. The issues are more with being in touch with his feelings than how he disagrees with me. His 'good boy' still gets in the way, and he needs approval from me."

The findings in this study bear out the pattern found in other research. Regarding marital conflicts, Goldman quotes from Levenson's study that when things go bad, "women tend to keep confronting their husbands to get to the root of the problems and want their husbands to fight back. But men tend to be conciliatory, or, if that fails, withdrawing" (1984, p. 5f).

Two subjects mentioned a third mode of dealing with conflicts. They used intellectualization as a means of warding off uncomfortable feelings. "I tend

to get stuck up there in my head and can be obstinate." One subject felt he placated by giving in, but saw himself as the initiator to look at problems. He found his wife's response rigid and unyielding and wished she would initiate problem solving. He said, "I have modeled myself after my mother in initiating..."

Three subjects told success stories as to how differently they had handled their impasses, and were optimistic about the future. One subject, without a success story said, "I am not much smarter in resolving certain issues."

Three subjects were aware of the regressive aspects of their feelings in dealing with conflicts, and made interpretations linking present feelings to the past. One recalled his father's domineering and loud voice and his mother's helplessness, pain, and passivity. "I am just like my mother." Another subject remembered his feelings of helplessness and guilt experienced when his mother yelled. One subject made no connection between past and present. The other two did not recall any pain recurring from the past.

Memorable major conflicts were an unwanted pregnancy, financial matters, affairs after marriage, and jealousy--all precipitated crises. A few dealt with the crisis and found resolution within a

reasonable time. Others struggled with disquietude for a prolonged period. Some found growth and insight from the experience.

It appears that the satisfying intimate marriages also have periods of conflict and problems much like other couples do. The difference is that there is a higher degree of satisfaction, caring and commitment enabling them to work out solutions.

Three subjects had been in therapy lasting from a few months to several years. Five subjects had been in training or classes such as marriage encounter, EST, couples' communication, marriage enrichment, encounter group, and management training. All stated that the experience helped them to become more self-aware and to grow.

One subject seriously considered divorce. Five never have. None of the subjects had ever separated.

Affectional/Sexual Relationship

Sexual adjustment is an important part of intimacy, but sexuality cannot be separated from emotional connection through words, touching, and commitment (Masters & Johnson).

When asked the question, "How would you describe your affectionate and sexual relationship with your

wife?" four subjects thought the affectional/sexual life was satisfying, very good to excellent. Four subjects wanted sexual intercourse more frequently than their wives. Three subjects had worked out solutions, taking into consideration each other's needs.

Regarding change, several subjects made reference to the earlier years of intense physical passion, but concomitantly their views of sexual intimacy had changed. One summarized:

> Earlier, she was absolutely insatiable. I felt the same. I know people mistake passion for love. When passion dissipates, they feel unloved. What I had earlier for Mary was the passion of mystery. Ten years ago I would have opted for passion. Now I am more appreciative of the true essence of the relationship. The high passion comes back now and then, like on the enrichment weekend.

All subjects believed that their affectional/sexual life had deepened through the years in a more total way through trust, common bonds, understanding and love.

Two responses were unique. One said he was satisfied with the affectional/sexual relationship with his wife, but believes "sex does not play a prominent part" in their lives. "We don't talk about sex. I wouldn't know how to talk about it with anyone." The other subject had an excellent mutual demonstration of

affection, but sexuality per se was not as "free flowing" as he would like. He would like more frequency and spontaneity. Yet sex was often very satisfying. He was optimistic about improvement.

Overall, the subjects had a satisfying-to-excellent affectional/sexual relationship. The interview schedule did not probe for non-verbal expressions of affection, and only a few mentioned lots of hugging, kissing, etc.

Self-description

Intimacy requires self-knowledge, since it is not possible to relate to another unless one can separate self from other (Ehrenberg). Intimacy with self essentially is to be in touch with those "ideas, feelings, attitudes, beliefs, fears, and hopes that are most within us" (McMahon 1982, p. 301).

The question, "How would you describe yourself in matters of intimacy and relationships?" was not a question leading to a dénouement. The subjects' process of self-disclosure during the interview indeed said more about them than the actual telling.

All subjects saw themselves as intimate, relating, and capable of self-disclosure with their wives. One said, "I consider myself a successfully intimate

person, capable of sustaining a relationship. I show my feelings readily. I cry, I get angry, I show affection...I am not that much smarter about resolving conflicts."

All subjects changed in their increased capacity for intimacy, but there was a difference as to the degree of change. The younger four subjects had experienced a degree of self-awareness and some intimacy with another person prior to the marriage. They saw their capacity for intimacy grow and become more refined. They experienced greater depth and breadth in loving as well as in examining those traits which interfered with intimacy.

The older two subjects made monumental changes within their marriages, and basically learned to relate intimately when they were in their late forties. One subject clearly stated, "my wife has been the most influential person" in this change. Prior to this, his thrust toward relating had been to "gain approval." The disclosure of an affair was a milestone for him. "It was the greatest act of trust I had engaged in, saying something I didn't have to say."

The other subject married in 1953, first experienced intimate relating in 1975 through marriage encounter, and had become more proficient only in

recent years. He expressed self-acceptance: "It is a shame that I wasted years not knowing how to get close to Joan, but I feel very good about the present."

All subjects stated their wives were the most influential persons in their lives in developing their capacity for intimacy, and each valued his wife. The following statements reflected the importance of the marriage relationship: "best thing that ever happened to me," "more important than anything else," "cannot conceive of being with a better woman," and "trust her loving heart."

The profile of the subjects abstracted from the interviews showed the following characteristics:

1. An avowed commitment to the marriage
2. Made intimacy a priority
3. Good capacity for introspection
4. Valued good communication
5. Self-acceptance
6. Appreciation of wife's qualities
7. Ability to step out of early conditioning

The responses of the wives were primarily in agreement wtih the subject's reporting. However, there were some differences. Except for the two highest-ranked subjects, those others viewed themselves higher in their capacity for intimacy than their wives viewed

them. This is the researcher's interpretation, since there is no quantified data for the husbands to be compared with the wives' ratings. But this does not negate the general satisfaction level experienced by the wives.

According to Jourard, "The male role...will not allow man to acknowledge or to disclose the entire breadth and depth of his inner experience to himself or to others. Man seems obliged, rather, to hide much of his real self..." (p. 35).

The interviewing process experienced by this researcher was positive. The subjects appeared open, honest and straightforward. Some of the subjects were emotional and vulnerable and, at times, poignant.

Fisher and Stricker state that self-disclosure is an important "index of intimacy" (p. xi) with self. If the intrapsychic process of intimacy is the ability of the individual to gain full knowledge of self and be willing to share this with another without the other reciprocating, these subjects, in differing degrees, indeed met the criteria. They all were intimate with self.

CHAPTER V

Discussion of the Findings

This chapter discusses the highlights of the findings taken from the exploratory case study of six married men who appeared to have a stable, intimate marriage lasting seven years or more. The study was made in an effort to understand how these men experienced intimacy within marriage.

The discussion is conceptualized under (a) Consciousness: The Essence of Intimacy, (b) Mother-Wife and Individuation, (c) Development of Self-awareness, (d) Friendship, and (e) Maturity: Love and Work Integrated.

Implications and recommendations are made for further study.

Consciousness: The Essence of Intimacy

As the conscious personality reflects the total self--the "I" within us, the ego--the development of intimacy in this study shows it is a product of such consciousness. Five of the six subjects in this study came from a socio-cultural and familial background devoid of intimacy as defined by the cultural norms in the 1980's. Yet, in adult life, these subjects have learned intimacy in varying degrees

through both external and internal precipitants. Conscious awareness appears to be the necessary ingredient for this learning.

One of the significant findings shows that a host of structured programs had helped the subjects to develop insight into their behavior and had brought change in both their outlook and behavior. It is worthy of note that the subjects continued to seek out programs to support their growth. This would agree with Wheelis (1969), in his article, "How People Change," in which he postulates that change occurs only if there is a concerted effort and will, and only if such action is maintained over a long period of time (p.63).

The value of the curative factors of group therapy --"imparting of information, instillation of hope, universality, altruism, the corrective recapitulation of the primary family group, development of socializing techniques, imitative behavior, interpersonal learning, group cohesiveness, and catharsis" (Yalom 1970, p. 5)-- was borne out in this study by the subjects' experience in ongoing group situations maintained to support the context of their new consciousness.

That the cultural norm influences people's thinking and expectations is recognized. Raush writes

on the importance of societal orientation:

> Intimacy also can be seen as a social demand, as a social statement of opportunities and restrictions available to us, and as a call for a particular form of commitment. Our loves are molded to match those of our families and neighbors. And the neighbors are not only our immediate community, but also...the general societal orientation. (p. 170)

This was clearly demonstrated by one subject, who, in describing the lack of intimate relationships during his childhood, said that, "all those around me were like my parents, sometimes worse." At a later but still impressionable time in his life, another subject first entered the Peace Corps and then lived in a commune. Both of these communities, much different from the one in which he grew up, had a marked effect in forming his consciousness of relating.

Other external influences were crises. Within the group there was a wide range of problems: unplanned pregnancy, affairs, jealousy, a son's surgery, and a financial setback. The crises were disruptive, stressful, and painful, and precipitated conflicts. Through talking, accepting, understanding, and endurance, the subjects developed a deeper awareness of self and of others. For several subjects, the crises were specific turning points leading to further

development. For most, crises, "under optimal circumstances, have a unifying effect and facilitate the further development of existing intimate relationship" (Fiske & Weiss 1984, p. 23).

However, the crises referred to were not all completely resolved. One subject still had problems with an issue that had occurred more than twenty years ago. "Joan has not completely forgiven me for those months and years." He tended to be accepting of his wife's feelings, however, and said, "It's easier for me now, because I don't blame myself so much." More recent crises in some subjects' lives had to do with financial change and extra-marital affairs. In each case, the subjects had to accept the fact that some problems take time to be resolved.

Although external influences in the subjects' development cannot be minimized, clinical experience bears out the evidence that external stimuli do not necessarily bring about change. In reference to some structured programs, pejorative remarks are frequently made: "quick fix," and "easy answer with no substance." Obviously, no matter how growth-producing a given stimulus may be, unless the individual is receptive and is willing to absorb and apply it, it is of little use. Thus viewed, the external precipitants

were catalytic but were not of themselves a sufficient cause for change. The inner life of the subjects, the consciousness, seemed to be the essence necessary for change.

Wheelis describes the process of inner change as occurring "...deliberately, consciously, and by design. Never easily, never for sure, but slowly, uncertainly, and only with effort, insight, and a kind of tenacious creative cunning" (p. 63). This process of change was exemplified by the subject who had been married for 33 years and only in recent years had learned to become intimate. For the bulk of his life, he functioned by adhering to roles, unaware, not truly available as a person in his relationships. The first glimmer of self-revelation came when his six-year-old daughter said, "Daddy, why are you home?" jolting him into a fleeting moment of awareness. "I was just like my father, busy outside being a do-gooder, but never at home. I never wanted to be like my father. God forbid--that was the last thing I wanted to do." However, that glimmer of awareness did not in itself bring about much change. It was only the beginning.

The oldest subject described himself as an "automaton" throughout the first 35 years of his life, prior to his awakening to consciousness. Judging from

their own reporting, the oldest two subjects had the most serious disturbance in identity. While others did not experience as long a period of lack of insight, effort, determination, and time were all reflected in their growth as well. The concept of maturity and identity is described by theorists from various orientations as "giving birth to himself" (Fromm 1947, p. 237) and "self-actualizing" (Maslow 1970). In general, maturity is developed through a strong sense of selfhood, through consciousness, and the ability to be intimate (Fairbairn, Guntrip, Winnicott, Wolf).

Mother-Wife and Individuation

The capacity for relatedness develops from the quality of mothering (Bowlby 1958, Fairbairn, Mahler). Dinnerstein (1976) states, "For virtually every human, the central infant-parent relationship, in which we form our earliest intense and wordless feelings toward existence, is a relationship with a woman" (p. 33).

This study did not focus on mother-son relationship in depth. Thus, only inferences can be made. Although only two of the subjects claimed to have had a close affectional relationship with their mothers, the others appeared to have had "good enough" mothering to separate and form an on-going relationship

with a woman in adulthood. Generally, the fathers were psychologically absent. The subjects seemed to have learned interpersonal relatedness from their mothers and gender and role identity from their fathers. Two subjects were explicit about their identification with their mothers in relating. One said, "I have modeled myself after my mother in terms of initiating conversation about conflictual matters." The other said, "I am just like my mother, passive and fearful." It was also apparent that the subjects learned about styles of relating to a woman more directly from their mothers than from their parents' spousal relationship.

A significant finding in this study demonstrated that the subjects had the most difficulty dealing with their wives' grievances toward them. "When she gets upset or complains, my automatic response is to shut down and not talk." "Her voice gets intense, and that gets to me; I withdraw." "I try to be nice to her by doing things, but she gets mad. She wants to deal with the issue."

Men tend to deny problems more than women (Goldman), and women tend to confront their husbands to get to the bottom of the problems. But men tend to be conciliatory, or, if that fails, they withdraw (Levenson). This appears to be related to the early

attachment of the child and the need to please the love object; the dynamics are then transferred to their subsequent relationship to a woman.

Hancock (1982), in her presentation entitled "Reckoning the Relationship Between Adult Daughters and Their Mothers," indicated that women felt "grown up" when (a) they were able to make decisions and (b) stand up to their mothers. Furthermore, the ability to reckon a woman's relationship with her mother had positive implications for spousal relationship in that she was then able to stand up to her husband. Could this same pattern of learning to make decisions and then standing up to their mothers have better prepared the men to meet and deal with spousal criticism?

Of the two subjects who did not have problems with wives' grievances but addressed them, one had experienced power and control over his mother-surrogates, his great aunts. The other had known his wife since he was 16, and their relationship had the resonance of a sibling relationship. He had also been free to express his feelings and opinions within his family during his childhood.

It would be of interest to ascertain if the other subjects had or had not worked through their ability to stand up and be themselves with their mothers, and

what effect it would have had on spousal relationships. The two mentioned in the previous paragraph were unusual, and both introduced the matter of dominance themselves. Many subjects were aware of their behavior in "placating or withdrawing" when grievances were addressed to them, and were well on their way to finding alternate modes of responding. This seems to be another phase of individuation within the context of the marriage. Silys Laing's (1963) poem entitled "Second Expulsion" expresses the idea of individuation within a marriage:

> "This let me learn, so hear me warn:
> Woman's son must twice be born."

Development of Self-awareness

The ability to be intimate with others must first entail the ability to know oneself. The vehicle for learning about oneself is interpersonal communication (Sullivan 1952), and "No one came to know himself except as an outcome of disclosing himself to another" (Derlega & Chaikin, p. 14).

All of the subjects were in touch with their feelings and thoughts to a large degree. Clinically interpreted, however, there were issues they omitted or overlooked, either by choice or because they were

not aware of their significance. One subject was unaware of his basic neediness and unresolved earlier deprivation. Another subject was unclear as to what early separation from his mother meant to him.

Self-awareness is never completed. The case histories reflect the evolution of self-awareness through gradual changes, spurts of change, and dormant periods. Self-awareness is not something one acquires once and for all, but is more a process of gradual expansion that accrues through interpersonal relationships. Fisk and Weiss (1984) state that "close relationships are essential not only to the beginning of self-concept but to its continuing change across life's course" (p. 28). In Travels with Charlie, Steinbeck suggests that loss of someone with whom to relate could lead to loss of self-concept. He writes of being alone for periods of time as long as eight months. As the days passed, he realized that his reactions had "thickened." He stopped whistling; he stopped talking to his dog. He had lost touch with the "subtleties of feeling" until he was finally "on a pleasure-pain basis." Then he realized that the "delicate shades of feelings, of reactions," came from communication, and without communication they tended to dissipate (p. 137).

The psychological growth of the individual is generally social in its development (Sullivan). The findings in this study show that most precipitants of awareness were interpersonal, whether it be the structured programs, the little girl saying, "Daddy, why are you home?" or the memory of one who had been deprived of physical contact having his mother touch him once a year to rub olive oil in his hair.

Gilligan, in her study, asked men and women, "How would you describe yourself to yourself?" She discovered that women's identity is defined "in the context of the relationship and judged by the standards of responsibility and care," and men's identity is defined in terms of separation and achievement, although the men mentioned "deep attachments" (pp. 161-162).

This study asked the subjects, "How would you describe yourself in matters of intimacy and relationships?" They described themselves in relation to their changing concept of a deeper capacity for intimacy, but invariably related this to their wives. It would have been of interest for the men to have described themselves without qualifying the question, and to determine if men who see intimacy as a priority in life would describe themselves in a way that would

differ from Gilligan's findings.

Friendship

In this study, the question of friendship was a by-product of the investigation of individuation. Friendships among the subjects were not as rare or as non-existent as in other findings (Fasteau, Levinson, Lewis), and the nature of their friendships appeared personal and not entirely activity-oriented.

One subject had many close friendships of an ongoing nature where personal as well as intellectual conversation was carried on. Another subject had a close male friend and confidante with whom he played tennis once a week. They would have lunch and share personal and professional matters. One subject's best friend was his brother, and he wanted more friends. One felt no need for "outside affiliation" because he found his family life met all of his needs. However, he did have close friends of long standing. One was indifferent. One longed to have friends, but found no male friends who were able to communicate at the intimate level he desired. He felt more at ease communicating with women, but his traditional view of marriage did not allow him to develop a friendship with any woman other than his wife.

These findings may suggest that men who are intimate with their wives may have a greater proclivity for developing friendship than those who lack this intimacy. Over all, men in this study depended to a large degree on their wives to meet their needs for companionship, which concurs with other studies (Baltena, Levinson).

Maturity: Love and Work Integrated

Earlier reference to Freud's dictum on the nature of maturity as "love and work" warrants examination in the context the study. Heretofore, the psychological construct of maturity in mental health polarized love and work rather than integrating the two. The polarization is projected into female deficiencies and male ideal. This concept of maturity is based on a male theory of development, in which maturity is equated with a cluster of such instrumental traits as initiative, assertiveness, rationality, decisiveness and self-sufficiency--all associated with separation, autonomy, achievement and success. The cluster of expressive traits, found commonly among women, such as warmth, nurturance, self-sacrifice, and being other-directed, are relegated to a less mature status, all associated with attachment, vulnerability, and

dependence (Broverman, Clarkson, Rosenkrantz, & Vogel 1972). Relevant to the instrumental and expressive roles of gender identity related to intimacy, a study by Pollak and Gilligan (1982) shows a difference between men's and women's perception of danger:

> The danger men saw in intimacy was a danger of entrapment or betrayal--being caught in a mothering relationship or humiliated by rejection and deceit. The danger that women described in achievement was a danger of isolation, a fear that in standing out or being set apart by success, they would be left alone. The differences found in this study suggest that men and women may experience attachment and separation in different ways (p. 71).

Intimacy requires the ability to be connected, vulnerable, emotional and dependent. Several of the men in this study had difficulties in these areas. A striking example is the silent inner pain one subject suffered because he felt it was irrational for him to be jealous and he did not want to sound "stupid." Another subject had difficulty expressing the paralysis of fear he experienced when confronted in a loud manner by his wife. Yet, although the subjects had these limitations, they still were able to share sensitive information and feelings about themselves with this researcher, and to discuss them with their wives. In so doing, they overcame cultural conditioning and have,

to a large degree, developed the expressive side of themselves.

Tavris (1983) reports on a study of 108 couples conducted by Antiell to determine what traditional masculine traits and feminine traits contributed to marital happiness. He found that the happiest husbands had the most feminine wives; the happiest wives had the most "feminine husbands"; and, in other words, the happiest couples were those where both husband and wife scored high on femininity. "Women and men who want both love and work need to keep the old values even as they learn new ones" (p. 96). Despite this, observation by Rubin indicates that when men admit or expose areas of weakness or vulnerability, some women react with fear because of their acceptance of the cultural evaluation of a man based on his strength.

Men in our society face a major dilemma in learning intimacy (Fasteau, Halas, Karlsson, Levinger, Tavris 1977, Zube). The existing bipolar stereotypes of gender identity do not promote in men the capacity for intimacy or, in women, the thrust for achievement (Levinger). Attention is called to this very issue in a book by Gilligan entitled <u>In a Different Voice</u>, and in Rubin's book, Intimate Stranger. The different frame of reference of the sexes interferes with true

intimacy between a man and a woman.

In the second half of the twentieth century, our society is slowly experiencing an expansion of the appropriate limits of stereotypes and definition of gender roles. Men are now attempting to incorporate the expressive roles, and women are striving to incorporate the instrumental roles into their lives.

Jung (1928) addressed the concept of the integration of inner polarities for developmental completeness. He believed that in middle age a man must own the feminine part of himself and the woman the masculine part of herself. Thus, maturity is seen as the integration of love and work.

Clinical Implications and Recommendations

Men and women follow a different developmental process as to how they go through separation-individuation, identification, and the formulation of self-concept expressed most often in instrumental and expressive roles. As a result, they develop a different frame of reference as to how they view the meaning of intimacy (Gilligan). More often than not, this very difference creates as much misunderstanding, grief, and alienation in heterosexual dyadic relationships as in marriage. The clinical

implications suggest the following considerations:

There is a need to incorporate in our general educational programs a course that would teach about men and women, just as existing courses provide sex education. The marital relationship is considered the most important relationship in human loving and psychological growth, yet there is so little awareness in general as to what it really entails. Existing courses on marriage and the family do not adequately prepare people for the complexities of marriage and its implications for psychological development.

One of the most common reasons people seek therapy involves marital difficulties or other problems related to marriage (Berman & Lief, Gurin et al., Prochaska). Since clinicians seem not as aware as they should be as to the nature of intimacy in a marriage or dyadic relationship, the training, supervision, consultation, and education of psychotherapists need to include an understanding of: (a) male-female developmental differences, (b) diagnostic use of cultural components, (c) diagnostic use of stages, (d) communication theory, and (e) understanding of the commonality of impasse and regression relating to intrapsychic and interpersonal problems.

In recent years, conjoint therapy has gained

prominence as a therapeutic modality, yet many still consider marital therapy to be "counseling," and regard it as short-term, superficial, problem-solving therapy Martin, p. 1). Conjoint therapy is often viewed as a place where primitive pathology cannot be worked through. As a result, separate referrals are often made, or one person is referred for further individual therapy. This may be the appropriate treatment, but the possibility of leading the couple to further isolation, distortion, and misunderstanding must not be overlooked. Change, even for the better, may be seen as a threat to the couple's homeostasis. In the presence of the dyad, there is minimal distortion, misunderstanding, or fear of separation.

One of the significant findings of this study indicates that a host of structured programs which have emerged in the culture since the mid-1960's--encounter groups, marriage encounter, EST, consciousness raising groups, communications workshops--have helped subjects develop insight into their emotions and have changed their behavior. It is the researcher's impression that professional psychotherapists have, in general, ignored or rejected such programs, often run by lay professionals. There has also been genuine concern over the "casualties" who entered therapy as the result

of their encounter-group experiences in the 60's and 70's. However, the Yalom and Lieberman study on encounter-group casualties concluded that "the positive gains from the experience were farreaching for many subjects" (1972, p. 253).

It is this researcher's conclusion that clinicians need to reconsider their professional biases and evaluate the benefits of existing non-professional programs. With this, a more informed referral could be made, or at least informed support could be given to those wishing to enter such programs.

Conclusions

The study began with areas of inquiry rather than a hypothesis to test. It was an exploratory study of men's experience of intimacy using a semi-structured interview schedule to "enlist rich detailed material that can be used in qualitative analysis" (Lofland, p. 76). The profile was assembled from underlying patterns of the subjects' descriptions of their inner processes of relating and their thoughts and feelings about specifics, rather than generalities, regarding marriage. One cannot minimize the possible influence of a researcher's a priori beliefs; however, the seven characteristics of the profile concur with concepts of

intimacy found in the review of the literature. These characteristics were:

1. An avowed commitment to the marriage
2. Made intimacy a priority
3. Good capacity for introspection
4. Valued good communication
5. Self-acceptance
6. Appreciation of wife's qualities
7. Ability to step out of early conditioning

It would appear that the instrument constructed for this study has relevance to research of intimacy and could be used for future projects to further test its usefulness.

In the area of adult development, there is a preponderance of studies done by male researchers utilizing male subjects regarding work, marriage, family, and adaptations (Levinson, McGill 1985, McWhirter & Mattison 1985, Vaillant). The existing publications do not articulate the detailed processes in probing conflicts, regression, vulnerability, and impasse. This, speculatively, could be seen as one of the many aspects related to gender difference in the areas of concentration and styles of questioning and probing.

This study has been conducted from a female bias.

Mead states that the study of gender differences in given experiences "should always be done by both men and women....Such research should be open-ended and allow for very slight and very subtle but possibly very significant differences between the two sexes..." (1978, p. 364).

The thrust of this study, particularly in the area of sharing feelings, dealing with conflicts and impasse, vulnerability, and regression, was born out of the researcher's interest and clinical observations of women articulating grievances toward their mates, their wish for more shared feelings, and talking together about conflicts--all important aspects of intimacy. It has been said, to understand a man, you must know his memories; hence the investigation began with a personal history. Since this study is focused on men, the role of women in creating conflicts and accelerating them was not addressed, except in passing. It would be of interest to find out if the same instrument were to be used by a male researcher, would there be a difference in the data collected? What would be elaborated? What would be omitted?

The findings in this study showed three major phases in the development of the marital relationship. McWhirter and Mattison (1985) studied 156 male

homosexual couples to investigate how relationships develop. They discovered that "regardless of the differences among the men, the relationships themselves form separate entities and pass through a series of developmental stages in much the same way that the person grows and develops" (p. x). In presenting their findings, they found that heterosexual couples and female couples were quick to agree that they, too, have gone through stages similar to those of the male couples. There is little research on heterosexual couples and the developmental stages they experience. Were it available in depth, it would shed further understanding on the nature of intimacy. Additional research is needed to determine if there is any correlation between stages in marriage and the development of specific traits as listed in the profile.

McMahon sees the dynamics of monogamous coupling as the "beginning of a new stage of development, one promoting the psychological growth of the parties involved" (1978, p. 105). The capacity for intimate involvement is seen as a result of the successful completion of previous developmental stages and "the opportunity to finish unfinished aspects of his personality for the first time outside of the nuclear

family" (p. 117). This study also suggests that the proclivity for regression in an intimate relation can be an opportunity to heal old wounds and grow, with or without therapy.

Men in our society face a major dilemma in learning intimacy because of their cultural heritage of the frontier norm (Douvan, Levinger), and because of their developmental task in the oedipal phase (Freud, Greenson). It is generally accepted that men do have more difficulty than women in forming intimate relations.

The subjects of this study were limited to upper-middle-class educated professionals. Their current explicit values are in agreement with contemporary concepts of intimacy which emphasizes communication and egalitarianism. However, these values were learned in adult life, and the subjects had to overcome their cultural conditioning to achieve this. All of the subjects have struggled through conflicts and experienced pain; at the same time, however, they managed to develop closeness, bonding, caring, loving, and commitment. Each subject managed to do this in his own way.

> The folkloric agonies of married couples are probably nothing more or less than the agonies of men

> and women who must live and struggle through life. In fact, what appears like pathology and avoidable suffering may actually be the movement of the personality to higher stages of integration, an event inevitably marked by sadness, longing, impulses toward reparation, possibly extreme anxiety and depression, experience of reference to earlier psychic events, which the new psychic state is in the process of integrating, all which may be occasioned in large part by the very psychic relatedness of the couple who must now struggle with the new content as it emerges in their psychic space" (McMahon, p. 115).

Itimacy is not something that is achieved once and for all. Like psychological growth, an intimate marriage does not "just happen." It takes work and commitment to maintain it. Intimacy is a process that takes place over time and is never completed.

Footnotes

[1] Hancock suggests Vaillant and Levinson's studies are research designed by male bias. One might speculate that there is a different frame of reference from a research designed by female bias (p. 7).

[2] Fusion is not used here as in the pathological meaning of symbiosis. Rather, it refers to an altered state of consciousness transcending the fear of ego boundary loss (Mahrer 1982, p. 150).

[3] Regression can be viewed as an opportunity or a danger in marriage. Recognizing regression can lead to working through old issues. Regression can also lead to chaos, unproductive fighting, acting out, and various compulsive behavior.

[4] Major studies of men's development have been conducted by men studying men (Levinson, Vaillant). Mead (1978) states: "Research on gender-specific behavior should always be done by both men and women... to correct for prejudice, bias, and myopia" (p. 365).

[5] Fisher & Stricker (1982); Mahrer (1982); McMahon (1982); Hatfield (1982); Douvan (1977); Erikson (1963). See dissertation pp. 14-23.

[6] Conflicts of a transactional nature are defined as the overt manifestation of the issue at hand, such as a disagreement over which house to buy. Conflicts rooted in transference distortions have their origin in early family relationships. For example, the disagreement over buying the house can be experienced by one partner as a critical control issue, when there was no negativity in the mind of the other. Regression refers to transference distortions which are repetitive.

[7] The researcher is aware that there may be a fatigue factor which may possibly affect the data. Nevertheless, two hours of interview at one sitting was deemed the most pragmatic in terms of the subjects' availability.

Appendix A

Letter to Couples

Dear Mr. and Mrs.

I am conducting a research project on men's experiences of and attitudes toward intimacy, particularly with regard to communication and sharing with their wives. As a married couple with more than seven years of experience with issues of close relationship, your willingness to participate in my project is truly appreciated.

As explained in our telephone conversation, I am enclosing questionnaires and an informed consent form. Would you each please complete the appropriate short questionnaire and the informed consent form right away or as soon as possible and return it. I have also enclosed a self-addressed stamped envelope for your convenience. All identifying information will be held in strictest confidence.

Please do not discuss the questionnaire with each other until the interview with Mr. is completed.

Thank you for contributing your time to the project. I sincerely appreciate your willingness to share your experience.

Very truly yours,

Lilly D. Nakamura, M.S.W.
Doctoral Candidate
California Institute for
Clinical Social Work

Code _____

Date _____

Confidential Questionnaire to Wives

Name _____ Age_____

Occupation _____

Education (Highest degree received)_____

(In what field?)_____

Marital status: 1st marriage_____2nd marriage_____

Other (specify)_____

Please check (✓) and summarize your first and most spontaneous responses to the following questions:

1. For the most part, my husband's relationships with his family of origin are (check ✓ one):

( ) excellent ( ) adequate

( ) very good ( ) inadequate

( ) good ( ) poor

Comments_____

_____

_____

2. My husband's ability to share feelings and thoughts with me is (check ✓ one):

( ) excellent ( ) adequate

( ) very good ( ) inadequate

( ) good ( ) poor

Comments _____

_____

_____

3. My husband's ability to handle both togetherness and separateness in relation to me is (check ✓ one):

( ) excellent ( ) adequate

( ) very good ( ) inadequate

( ) good ( ) poor

Comments _____

_____

_____

4. My husband's ability to deal with conflicts with me is (check ✓ one):

( ) excellent ( ) adequate

( ) very good ( ) inadequate

( ) good ( ) poor

Comments _____

_____

_____

5. My husband's ability to show emotional and physical affection is (check ✓ one):

( ) excellent ( ) adequate

( ) very good ( ) inadequate

( ) good ( ) poor

Comments _____

_____

_____

6. I would describe my husband's capacity for intimacy as (check ✓ one):

( ) excellent ( ) adequate

( ) very good ( ) inadequate

( ) good ( ) poor

Comments _____

_____

_____

CALIFORNIA INSTITUTE FOR CLINICAL SOCIAL WORK
INFORMED CONSENT FORM

We, _____ and _____, consent to participate in the research project entitled "An Exploration of Men's Intimacy as Expressed in Marriage." The procedures of this study have been approved by the dissertation committee of Lilly D. Nakamura, M.S.W., chaired by Bea Sommers, Ph.D.

I understand the procedure to be as follows:

1. Completion of a questionnaire and an Informed Consent Form by both of the parties whose signatures appear below.

2. Completion of an audiotaped 1-1/2 to two hour interview by the husband, whose signature appears below.

3. All information will be held in strictest confidence, and the anonymity of both parties will be protected by the following methods:

(a) The investigator, Lilly Nakamura, is the only person who will score the results of the questionnaires and the taped interview.

(b) The taped interview will be erased and the written materials destroyed as soon as the study is completed or by September 1, 1985, whichever is sooner.

(c) The names of the participants will not be used in any way.

(d) The presentation of this material in report or publication will exclude the identification of the participants in this study.

The following individuals will be available for consultation if any concerns arise as a result of participation in the study or procedure:

Lilly D. Nakamura M.S.W.
23560 Madison St. Ste 205
Torrance, Ca. 90505
(213) 539-3761

Rosemary C. Lukton, D.S.W.
Dean, C.I.C.S.W.
P. O. Box 241710
Los Angeles, Ca. 90024
(415) 843-1888

I understand that I may withdraw from the study at any time without penalty.

Date:_____ Signature _____(husband)

Date:_____ Signature _____(wife)

Code _____

Date _____

Appendix B

Confidential Questionnaire to the Husband

Name _____ Age _____

Address _____

Occupation _____

Education _____

Marital status (Please check appropriate space.)

1st marriage____ 2nd marriage____ Other_____

The following questions are about the family you grew up in:

1. Who was in your family of origin?

2. Are your parents divorced, separated, or widowed?

3. If reorganized by separation, divorce, or death, please describe structure of your family or families, including parents, step-parents, siblings, and any extended family member with whom you resided.

4. What was the educational background of your father?

5. What was the occupation of your father?

6. What was the educational background of your mother?

7. What was the occupation or occupational background of your mother?

Interview Schedule

1. Explicit question:

   What do you remember as the major messages of intimacy from childhood and adolescence?

   Interview guide:

   What kind of behavior do you remember about intimacy from your parents?

   How did your father relate to you?

   How did your mother relate to you?

   How did your parents deal with conflicts?

   Did you learn about intimacy from sources other than your family?

   Who has influenced you the most as to your ways of relating intimately?

2. Explicit question:

   How do you and your wife share your thoughts and feelings with each other?

   Interview guide:

   Under what conditions do you feel closest, most distant?

   What kinds of things are hard to talk about?

   How do you manage to talk about hard things?

   What is your most recent memorable experience

in terms of closeness resulting from self-disclosure?

What is your most recent memorable experience in terms of distance due to failed effort to self-disclose?

Do you share your fantasies and dreams/secrets with your wife?

How do you express your vulnerability?

3. Explicit question:

How do you handle the need for both closeness and separateness in your marriage?

Interview guide:

Which need do you find the easiest to handle?

How do you express these needs to your wife?

Have you or your wife developed separate sets of friends, interests, or activities?

Do you have very important friends outside the marriage? (Not meant to be sexual, yet an open-ended question.)

How do you feel when you are alone?

Has this changed over the course of the marriage?

Do you see your marriage in phases?

4. Explicit question:

How would you describe your methods of handling conflict in your marriage?

Interview guide:

Describe your most distressing conflict in the marriage.

Was the conflict resolved?

If unresolved, how did you deal with the unresolved conflict?

What were the feelings you were left with?

Have you had these feelings in other situations?

Have you had counseling of any kind to work out conflicts?

Have you ever seriously thought of separating or divorcing?

What was the process of resolving this conflict?

5. Explicit question:

How would you describe your affectionate (and/or sexual) relationship with your wife?

Interview guide:

If there have been changes, who or what

influenced the change?

How do you feel about the change?

How does your general relationship to your wife affect your ability to express affection/sexuality?

How does your expression of affection/sexuality affect your relationship with your wife?

6. Explicit question:

How would you describe yourself in matters of intimacy and relationships?

Interview guide:

How have you changed during the marriage in your capacity and expression of intimacy?

Who or what has influenced you the most in this regard?

What is your ideal image of intimacy?

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