

Invitation² Intimacy



A PREMARRIAGE COURSE

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LESSON THREE

INVITATION 2

Psychological Intimacy

In lesson 1, you learned that you are a three part being – spirit, soul and body and that God wants you to experience intimacy in all three areas when you are married. In lesson 2, you received an invitation from God to be forgiven of your sins and learned about spiritual intimacy and the roles of husband and wife in marriage. In lesson 3, you will learn how to achieve psychological intimacy by using a communication tool that can make misunderstandings a thing of the past.

PERSONAL STORY

When I saw this powerful graphic for how to communicate, I thought, “This is my lifeline. I won’t be so lonely in my marriage anymore.” It took my husband awhile before he felt the same way but when he realized how much I enjoyed having psychological intimacy with him. He became aware of his need for it too.

INTRODUCTION

There are 5 essential keys to understanding each other better. Watch for them as we go along.

LESSON

As you use the principals in this lesson, you will become closer in your soul. You will become intimate in the psychological area with your future spouse. In other words, you will learn to become more connected intellectually and emotionally.

Think of your soul as consisting of three parts: your mind, your emotions and your will. (What you think, feel and desire.) This is the psychological area of life.

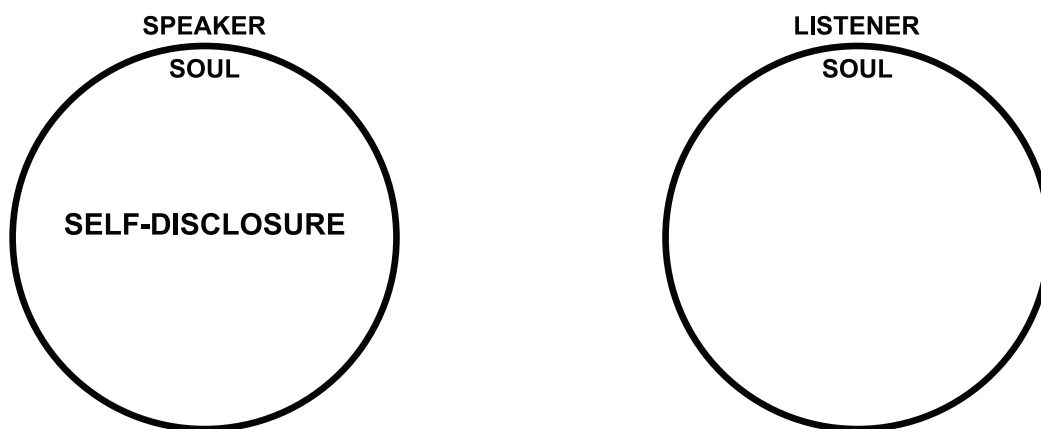
Psychological closeness involves speaking and listening...communication.

SPEAKER'S GOAL: SELF-DISCLOSURE

First we'll share the responsibility of the speaker.

When you speak, your goal is to **self-disclose**. What is going on inside your soul is a mystery until you tell what you are thinking, feeling and wanting. Think of **self-disclosure** as pulling back the curtains of your life and letting your future spouse see what's going on inside. I could say the word "intimacy" like this - "Into me see." Self-disclosure increases psychological intimacy. When you tell your spouse what is going on in your mind, emotions, and will, you are sharing your soul.

Notice in the diagram that there are two circles which represent the soul of a speaker and a listener. The speaker is going to self-disclose by sending three verbal messages to the listener. The speaker will start each sentence with the little word "I". For example: I think, I feel and I want.



Consider this example of self-disclosure as a man communicates with his fiancée.

"I've been **thinking** about our upcoming wedding and how special it will be for us. However I am **concerned** that we might spend too much money on it. I'm **worried** because I **want** to have a wonderful honeymoon also. So, I **would like** to make a budget for our wedding.

When you follow this pattern (sharing thoughts, feelings and desires), first you share or disclose what you are thinking.

ESSENTIAL KEY #1: DISCLOSE YOUR "MIND" - SHARING THOUGHTS

In this example, the man *first* shared what he was **thinking** about their wedding. This helps the woman get on the same page.

If you don't share what you've been thinking about with your future spouse, he or she might think things like the following:

- What are you talking about?
- That's really a random comment.
- I'll never figure him or her out.
- I have no idea why he/she feels the way he/she does.
- Why is he/she always "barking" orders at me?

So to communicate your **thoughts** use phrases like I think or I believe.

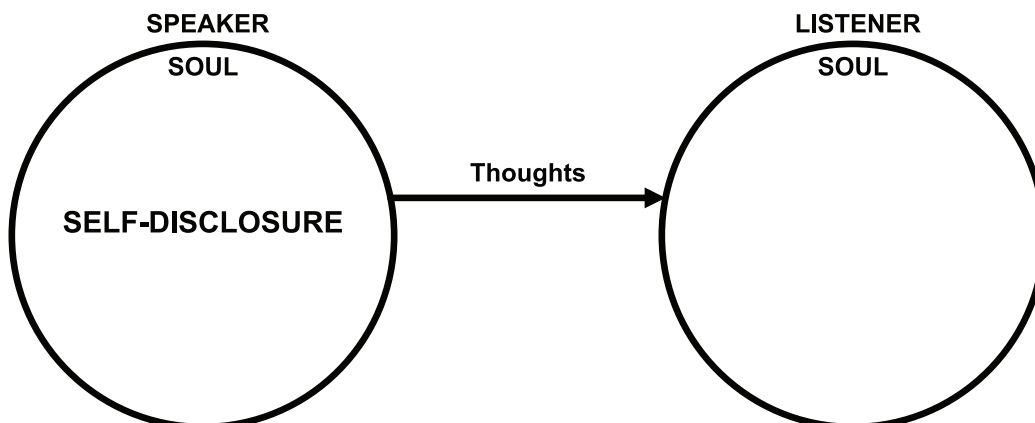
Like in our example: "I've been *thinking* about our upcoming wedding."

The Bible says:

"...Become complete. Be of good comfort, be of one mind, live in peace; and the God of love and peace will be with you." 2 Corinthians 13:11 (NKJ)

That verse tells us to be "complete" and of "one mind" but we can't be of one mind if we don't say what we are thinking. It's a mystery.

Notice we've added an arrow in the diagram showing that the speaker shares his/her thoughts.



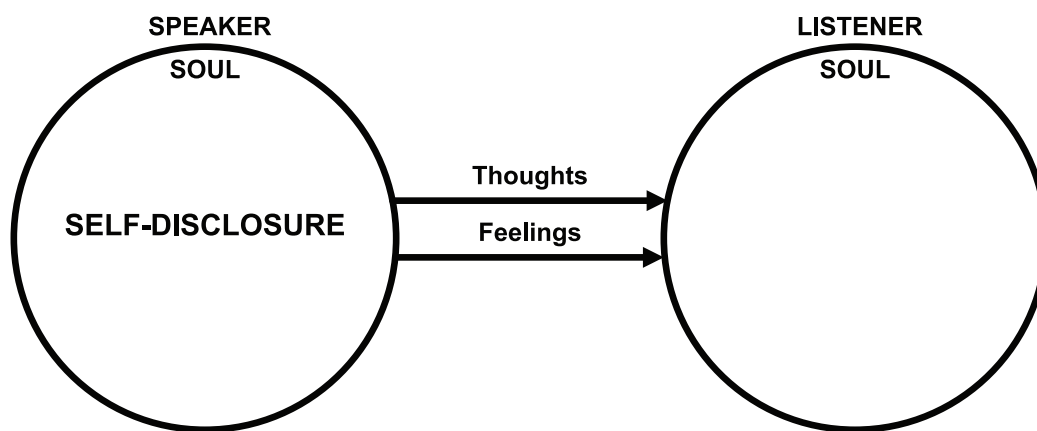
Q1. Think about a situation you have experienced recently. What were you thinking in regards to that situation?

After sharing your thoughts with the listener, next explain how you feel emotionally about it and disclose your feelings.

ESSENTIAL KEY #2: DISCLOSE YOUR "EMOTIONS" - SHARING FEELINGS

Next in our example, the man communicates how he feels about the upcoming wedding, "However I am **concerned** that we might spend too much money on it. I'm **worried**..."

To communicate your **feelings** use phrases like I feel... or I am... filling in the blanks with an emotion. Notice we've added an arrow in the diagram showing the speaker shares how he/she feels.



Q2. How were you feeling during your recent situation you mentioned on question 1? Can you find a word on the following list that fits?

accepted	glad	manipulated	smothered
afraid	grateful	miserable	sorry
angry	guilty	misunderstood	stupid
betrayed	happy	neglected	surprised
cheated	helpless	nervous	suspicious
concerned	hopeful	offended	tempted
confused	hurt	overwhelmed	threatened
controlled	ignored	pleased	tired
defensive	impatient	pressured	unappreciated
depressed	inadequate	proud	uneasy
disappointed	insecure	rejected	unorganized
encouraged	irritated	relaxed	unwanted
excited	jealous	relieved	upset
exhausted	lonely	sad	used
frustrated	loved	shocked	worried

When you share your feelings, it helps your fiancée understand how you are being affected emotionally by what is going on. When your fiancée shares how he or she is feeling, avoid saying, “You shouldn’t feel that way.” Emotions or feelings are neither right nor wrong; they simply indicate what is going on inside of you.

Q3. Is it hard to admit how you feel or to share your emotions? Why or why not?

After the speaker has communicated his/her thoughts and feelings, the speaker then needs to share his/her desires in regards to that situation.

ESSENTIAL KEY #3: DISCLOSE YOUR "WILL" - SHARING DESIRES

Lastly in our example, the man says, "I **want** to have a wonderful honeymoon also. So, I **would like** to make a budget for our wedding."

To communicate your **desires**, use phrases such as I want, I would like, I wish or I hope.

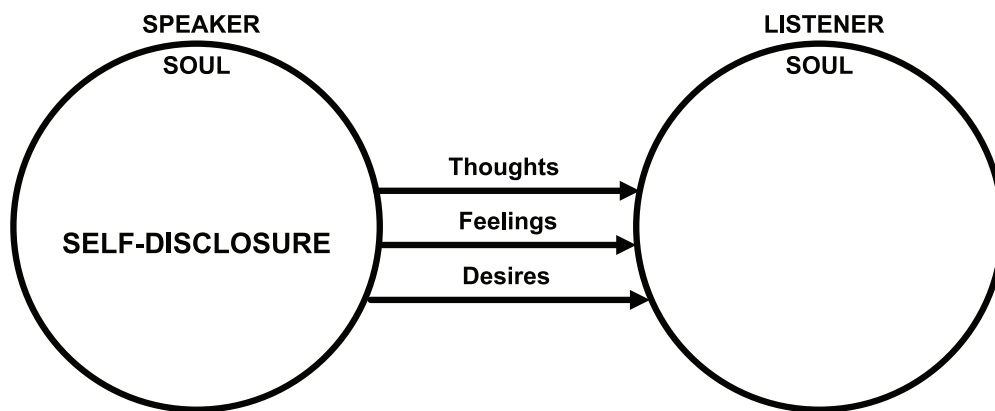
If you don't share your desires, your spouse never knows exactly what you want. Remember, it is a mystery.

Have you ever thought things like the following?

- If I have to ask him or her to do it, I think he or she is only doing it because I asked for it.
- If he/she can't figure out the obvious, I'm not going to tell him/her.
- I have no idea what he/she wants.

Q4. Is it difficult for you to express what you want? Why?

Notice we've added an arrow in the diagram showing the speaker needs to share what he or she desires.



Q5. What did you want in regards to the situation you mentioned in Q1?

It's important for a couple to know what the other wants. They can then love each other by trying to give the other person what he or she wants. However, you need to be willing to share your wants without requiring that your spouse fulfill them. If you don't share what you want, you are depriving your spouse of an opportunity to give.

We've shown how the speaker needs to send three messages beginning with "I". I think, I feel and I desire. When you share your thoughts, feeling and desires with your future spouse, it's like a grounded electrical cord. Three prongs get the best connection.

WELL WORTH THE EFFORT

Sharing your soul with your fiancée may seem like a lot of work, but the reward is well worth the effort. Working at your marriage and communication skills benefits you and your spouse.

"The soul of a lazy man desires, and has nothing; but the soul of the diligent shall be made rich." Proverbs 13:4 (NKJ)

A man may find this area of intimacy difficult, but consider this example: Would a husband be happy with a wife who refused to share her body with him, just because it took effort to get undressed?

If a husband knew his wife wouldn't be intimate in the physical area, would he have married her? Yet many wives long to know their husband's soul, but are denied this area of intimacy.

The purpose of psychological intimacy isn't to make the other person agree with you or do what you want or even to change their mind. The purpose is to **understand each other**. You may not be in agreement but you can have shared understanding.

Your fiancée deserves to understand you, even if he or she doesn't choose to do what you want. Psychological intimacy is gaining shared understanding.

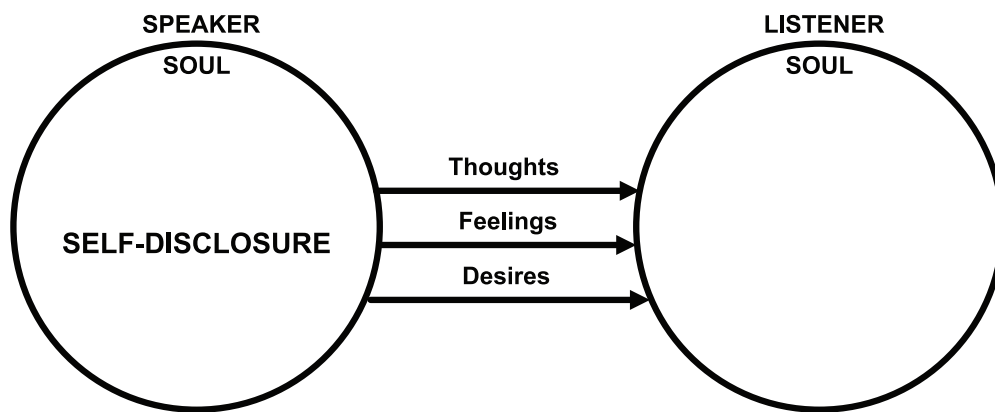
Q6. How comfortable are you sharing your ideas or feelings with your fiancée?

Q7. Do you try to make your fiancée feel accepted when he or she shares things they are thinking, feeling, or wanting? Explain.

We've told you the responsibility of the speaker (to self-disclose through sharing what you are thinking, feeling and desiring). Now we're going to explain the responsibility of the listener.

LISTENER'S GOAL: UNDERSTANDING

As the speaker shares, the listener's goal is to gain *understanding*. Notice we added the word understanding inside the listener's circle.



Here are two characteristics of a good lover - a good listener.

ESSENTIAL KEY #4: A GOOD LISTENER IS ATTENTIVE

A. Be Attentive.

- *Stop your thoughts.* Try to understand what the other person is saying. Don't try to think of how you will answer. Give your full attention. Allow the speaker to finish without interruptions. The Bible calls people who won't listen "foolish."

"Fools have no interest in understanding; they only want to air their own opinions."

Proverbs 18:2 (NLT)

"He who answers a matter before he hears it, It is folly and shame to him."

Proverbs 18:13 (NKJ)

Q8. Why is it foolish not to listen?

Q9. What kind of listener are you? Where is your focus?

"Don't be selfish; don't live to make a good impression on others. Be humble, thinking of others as better than yourself. Don't think only about your own affairs, but be interested in others, too, and what they are doing." **Philippians 2:3–4** (NLT)

- *Use body language.* Show you are listening by giving your fiancée eye contact, nodding, and leaning forward.

ESSENTIAL KEY #5: A GOOD LISTENER IS RESPONSIVE

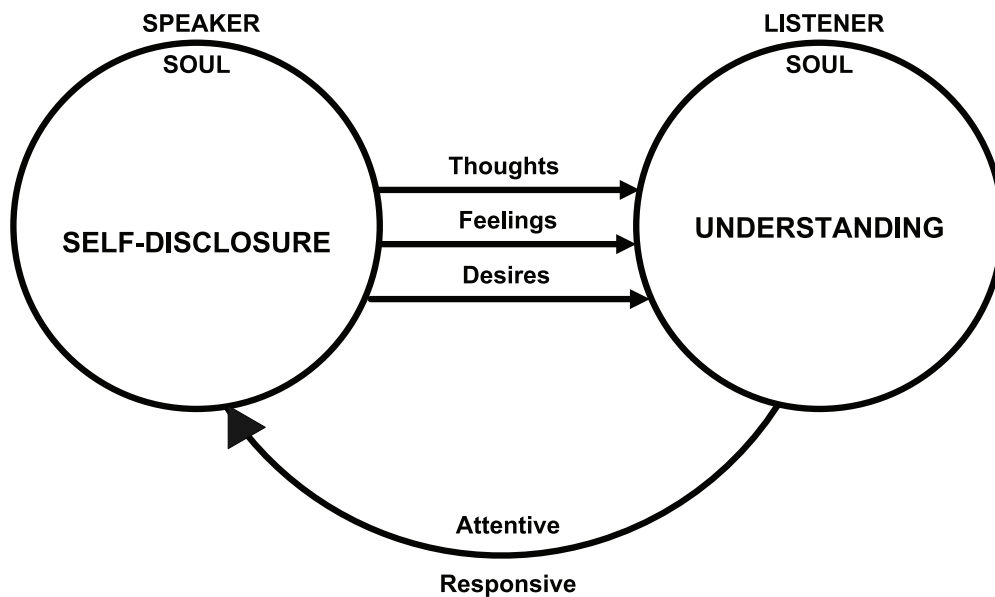
B. Be Responsive.

- *Ask questions.* Help your fiancée communicate what is going on in his or her soul by asking soul-disclosing questions. For example, the listener could say, “Tell me...:
 - What you have been thinking about that situation?
 - How do you feel about it? How is it affecting you emotionally?
 - What do you want to do in regards to that situation? Are you just wanting me to listen or do you need me to do something about it?

“A plan in the heart of a man is {like} deep water, but a man of understanding draws it out.” Proverbs 20:5 (NASB)

- *Repeat Back.* Listen so you can repeat back what you heard. This produces shared understanding. If you don’t understand, maybe you need clarification. Begin with phrases like, “What I heard you say was...” or “Are you saying...?”

Notice on the diagram that we added an arrow pointing to the speaker. It shows that the listener is listening attentively and being responsive by asking good questions and repeating back what the speaker said.



Feedback is important to psychological intimacy. First, you are making sure you heard what was said. If you got it wrong, you can get the message clarified. Secondly, you show your spouse that his or her message is important to you.

Let's go back to our example. The woman in our example has listened to the man share his soul. Now she responds by feeding back what she heard and shows that she values him and what he shared with her.

"I appreciate you sharing these things with me. Let me make sure I understand. I heard you say that you have been **thinking** about our upcoming wedding. You **desire** to make it special for both of us. You said you were **afraid** we might spend too much money on the wedding and maybe not have enough for the honeymoon. So you would like to take some time to set up a budget for our wedding. Is that right?"

Notice the example is not word for word, which might be annoying. The fiancée has been attentive by stopping what she was doing to give her future husband eye contact. She has been responsive by summing up the main points of what he shared and thanked him for sharing.

If she misses something important, he can clarify what he said. Once she is sure she has understood what he is trying to communicate, she can share her thoughts, feeling and desires in regards to that issue.

Activity:

Tell your future spouse what you think, feel and desire in regards to some event coming up this week. Then have him or her feedback what he/she heard you say. Practice being the speaker and the listener.

Homework:

Practice using this simple communication tool each day. Use it with your fiancé, someone you work with, a friend and even with God.

Please continue with **Lesson Four** which will reveal the root cause of conflicts and negative emotions in your relationship.