



Overview

"Intimacy and Desire: Awaken the Passion in Your Relationship" by Dr. David Schnarch is a comprehensive guide that delves into the complexities of sexual desire within long-term relationships. The book explores the emotional and psychological dynamics that influence intimacy, offering insights and strategies for couples who struggle with mismatched sexual desire or find that their passion has waned over time.

Core Concepts

At the heart of the book is the idea that sexual desire is deeply intertwined with emotional growth and personal development. Dr. Schnarch introduces the concept of "differentiation," which refers to an individual's ability to maintain their sense of self while staying emotionally connected to their partner. He argues that true intimacy and sexual passion are rooted in this balance between closeness and autonomy.

Challenges of Desire

Dr. Schnarch addresses common issues couples face, such as desire discrepancies, where one partner has a higher or lower sex drive than the other. He explains that these challenges often stem from underlying emotional issues rather than physical problems. By focusing on emotional self-regulation and communication, couples can work through these difficulties and reignite their sexual connection.

Techniques and Exercises

The book provides practical exercises and techniques to help couples enhance their emotional and sexual intimacy. These include methods for improving communication, developing emotional resilience, and increasing self-awareness. Dr. Schnarch emphasizes that personal growth is key to resolving sexual issues, and he encourages both partners to take responsibility for their own desires and needs.

Building a Stronger Connection

"Intimacy and Desire" is not just about fixing sexual problems; it's about building a deeper, more meaningful connection with your partner. Dr. Schnarch challenges readers to confront their vulnerabilities and grow individually and as a couple. By doing so, couples can achieve a more fulfilling and passionate relationship.



Conclusion

Overall, *"Intimacy and Desire"* offers a profound exploration of the emotional underpinnings of sexual desire in long-term relationships. It provides valuable insights and practical tools for couples looking to deepen their intimacy, overcome challenges, and rekindle their passion. Whether you're experiencing desire discrepancies or simply want to enhance your connection, this book serves as a thoughtful and empowering guide.



Blog

Rekindling Passion: Insights from "Intimacy and Desire"

In many long-term relationships, the initial spark of passion can begin to fade, leaving couples wondering how to reignite the flame that once burned so brightly. Dr. David Schnarch's book, *"Intimacy and Desire: Awaken the Passion in Your Relationship,"* offers profound insights into understanding and addressing the complex dynamics of sexual desire within committed relationships. This book is not just about sex—it's about building deeper emotional connections and fostering personal growth to enhance intimacy.

Understanding Desire Discrepancies

One of the most common issues couples face is mismatched sexual desire, where one partner has a higher or lower sex drive than the other. This can lead to feelings of frustration, rejection, or inadequacy on both sides. Dr. Schnarch argues that these discrepancies are often rooted in deeper emotional and psychological issues rather than just physical differences.

In *"Intimacy and Desire,"* Schnarch introduces the concept of "differentiation," which refers to an individual's ability to maintain their sense of self while staying emotionally connected to their partner. He explains that a lack of differentiation can lead to emotional fusion, where partners become overly dependent on each other for validation and security. This dynamic often manifests in sexual desire discrepancies, as one partner may withdraw or lose interest in sex as a way of preserving their individuality.

The Role of Emotional Growth in Sexual Desire

According to Schnarch, true intimacy and passion are rooted in the balance between closeness and autonomy. He emphasizes that personal growth and emotional self-regulation are crucial for overcoming sexual challenges in a relationship. Instead of looking to your partner to fulfill all your emotional needs, Schnarch encourages individuals to focus on their own personal development.

By becoming more emotionally resilient and self-aware, you can bring a stronger sense of self into your relationship. This, in turn, can enhance your sexual connection, as both partners feel more secure and less dependent on each other for validation. When each person in the relationship is responsible for their own desires and needs, it creates a healthier dynamic that fosters mutual respect and deeper intimacy.



Practical Exercises to Enhance Intimacy

"Intimacy and Desire" is not just a theoretical exploration of sexual dynamics—it's also a practical guide for couples looking to improve their relationship. Dr. Schnarch provides a variety of exercises designed to help couples communicate more effectively, develop emotional resilience, and increase self-awareness.

For example, one exercise involves practicing "eyes-open" sex, where couples are encouraged to maintain eye contact during intimate moments. This practice can help couples stay present and connected, fostering a deeper emotional bond. Other exercises focus on improving communication around sexual issues, encouraging partners to openly discuss their desires, fears, and boundaries.

Building a Deeper Connection

The ultimate goal of *"Intimacy and Desire"* is to help couples build a deeper, more meaningful connection with each other. Schnarch challenges readers to confront their vulnerabilities and work through their emotional barriers. By doing so, couples can achieve a level of intimacy that goes beyond physical pleasure, leading to a more fulfilling and passionate relationship.

Whether you're dealing with desire discrepancies or simply looking to enhance your emotional and sexual connection, *"Intimacy and Desire"* offers valuable insights and practical tools to help you on your journey. The key takeaway from Schnarch's work is that intimacy and desire are not just about sex—they're about growing together as individuals and as a couple.

Conclusion

If you're looking to rekindle the passion in your relationship, consider exploring the principles outlined in *"Intimacy and Desire."* By focusing on emotional growth, communication, and self-awareness, you can overcome challenges and build a stronger, more intimate connection with your partner. Remember, the journey to deeper intimacy is ongoing, and with the right tools and mindset, you can keep the flames of desire burning bright for years to come.

For more tips and resources on building a strong, intimate relationship, visit [CoupleStrong](#).



Handout

Couple's Guide to Rekindling Desire: Insights from "Intimacy and Desire"

Introduction This handout is inspired by Dr. David Schnarch's *"Intimacy and Desire: Awaken the Passion in Your Relationship."* It provides practical insights and exercises to help couples address issues of sexual desire, build deeper emotional connections, and reignite the passion in their relationship.

1. Understanding Differentiation

Key Insight:

- Differentiation is the ability to maintain your sense of self while staying emotionally connected to your partner. It is crucial for a healthy, passionate relationship.

Action Steps:

- **Reflect on Your Sense of Self:** Take some time to think about how you maintain your individuality within your relationship. Are you overly dependent on your partner for validation, or do you have a strong sense of who you are?
- **Discuss with Your Partner:** Have a conversation about differentiation. Talk about how you can both support each other in maintaining individuality while staying connected.

2. Addressing Desire Discrepancies

Key Insight:

- Sexual desire discrepancies are common and often rooted in emotional dynamics rather than physical issues. Understanding and addressing these dynamics can help resolve these discrepancies.

Action Steps:

- **Open Communication:** Sit down with your partner and discuss any differences in sexual desire. Approach the conversation with empathy, focusing on understanding each other's needs and perspectives.
- **Set Mutual Goals:** Work together to set goals that address both partners' needs. For example, agree to make time for intimacy that satisfies both of you, even if it means exploring new ways to connect.



3. Practicing Eyes-Open Intimacy

Key Insight:

- Eyes-open intimacy is a technique that helps couples stay present and emotionally connected during sex, fostering deeper intimacy.

Action Steps:

- **Practice Together:** During your next intimate encounter, try maintaining eye contact with your partner. Focus on staying present in the moment and connecting with each other on an emotional level.
- **Reflect:** Afterward, discuss how the experience felt. Did it help you feel more connected? What emotions came up for you during the experience?

4. Building Emotional Resilience

Key Insight:

- Emotional resilience involves being able to manage your own emotions and reactions, which is key to maintaining a healthy relationship.

Action Steps:

- **Self-Reflection:** Identify situations where you tend to react emotionally. How do these reactions impact your relationship? What could you do differently to manage your emotions more effectively?
- **Partner Support:** Share your reflections with your partner and discuss ways you can support each other in becoming more emotionally resilient.

5. Enhancing Communication

Key Insight:

- Effective communication is essential for resolving issues of intimacy and desire. It helps build trust and understanding between partners.

Action Steps:

- **Set Aside Time:** Regularly set aside time to talk openly about your sexual relationship. Discuss what's working well and where there's room for improvement.
- **Use "I" Statements:** When discussing sensitive topics, use "I" statements to express your feelings and needs without blaming or accusing your partner (e.g., "I feel distant when we don't spend time together" rather than "You never make time for me").



6. Personal Growth as a Path to Intimacy

Key Insight:

- Personal growth and self-awareness are essential for fostering a deep, intimate connection with your partner. By working on yourself, you contribute to the overall health of the relationship.

Action Steps:

- **Identify Areas for Growth:** Think about areas where you'd like to grow, whether it's becoming more assertive, improving your emotional regulation, or enhancing your self-confidence.
- **Share with Your Partner:** Talk about your personal growth goals with your partner and discuss how you can support each other in your individual journeys.

Final Thoughts

Intimacy and Desire offers valuable insights into the emotional and psychological dynamics that influence sexual desire in long-term relationships. By focusing on differentiation, addressing desire discrepancies, and enhancing communication and emotional resilience, you can reignite the passion in your relationship and build a deeper, more fulfilling connection.

For more tips and resources on building a strong, intimate relationship, visit [CoupleStrong](http://CoupleStrong.com).

Prepared by CoupleStrong *Strengthening relationships, one couple at a time.*



Assessment

Intimacy and Desire Couples Assessment

Based on "Intimacy and Desire" by Dr. David Schnarch

Instructions:

This assessment is designed to help you and your partner evaluate the emotional and sexual dynamics in your relationship, inspired by the principles from *"Intimacy and Desire."* Each partner should complete the assessment separately, and then you can come together to discuss your responses.

For each statement, rate your agreement on a scale from 1 to 5:

- **1 = Strongly Disagree**
- **2 = Disagree**
- **3 = Neutral**
- **4 = Agree**
- **5 = Strongly Agree**

Section 1: Differentiation and Individuality

- **I maintain a strong sense of self while being emotionally connected to my partner.**

☐ 1 ☐ 2 ☐ 3 ☐ 4 ☐ 5

- **I feel comfortable expressing my thoughts and desires, even if they differ from my partner's.**

☐ 1 ☐ 2 ☐ 3 ☐ 4 ☐ 5

- **I am not overly dependent on my partner for validation or approval.**

☐ 1 ☐ 2 ☐ 3 ☐ 4 ☐ 5

- **I can stay emotionally connected to my partner without losing my sense of individuality.**

☐ 1 ☐ 2 ☐ 3 ☐ 4 ☐ 5

- **I support my partner's individuality and encourage them to pursue their own interests and growth.**

☐ 1 ☐ 2 ☐ 3 ☐ 4 ☐ 5



Section 2: Emotional and Sexual Connection

- **We have open and honest conversations about our sexual desires and needs.**

☐ 1 ☐ 2 ☐ 3 ☐ 4 ☐ 5

- **Our sexual relationship is satisfying for both of us.**

☐ 1 ☐ 2 ☐ 3 ☐ 4 ☐ 5

- **We are able to address differences in sexual desire without conflict or resentment.**

☐ 1 ☐ 2 ☐ 3 ☐ 4 ☐ 5

- **We feel emotionally connected during intimate moments.**

☐ 1 ☐ 2 ☐ 3 ☐ 4 ☐ 5

- **We actively work to keep the passion alive in our relationship.**

☐ 1 ☐ 2 ☐ 3 ☐ 4 ☐ 5

Section 3: Emotional Resilience

- **I am able to manage my emotions effectively, even in challenging situations.**

☐ 1 ☐ 2 ☐ 3 ☐ 4 ☐ 5

- **I take responsibility for my own emotional well-being.**

☐ 1 ☐ 2 ☐ 3 ☐ 4 ☐ 5

- **I can handle my partner's emotions without becoming overwhelmed or defensive.**

☐ 1 ☐ 2 ☐ 3 ☐ 4 ☐ 5

- **I feel confident in my ability to navigate emotional challenges in our relationship.**

☐ 1 ☐ 2 ☐ 3 ☐ 4 ☐ 5

- **We support each other in becoming more emotionally resilient.**

☐ 1 ☐ 2 ☐ 3 ☐ 4 ☐ 5

Section 4: Communication and Growth

- **We regularly discuss our relationship and how we can improve it.**

☐ 1 ☐ 2 ☐ 3 ☐ 4 ☐ 5



- **We are both committed to personal growth and bringing our best selves to the relationship.**
☐ 1 ☐ 2 ☐ 3 ☐ 4 ☐ 5
- **We feel comfortable discussing sensitive topics, such as sexual issues or emotional challenges.**
☐ 1 ☐ 2 ☐ 3 ☐ 4 ☐ 5
- **We support each other's goals and aspirations, both individually and as a couple.**
☐ 1 ☐ 2 ☐ 3 ☐ 4 ☐ 5
- **We are both open to making changes and improvements to enhance our relationship.**
☐ 1 ☐ 2 ☐ 3 ☐ 4 ☐ 5

Scoring:

- **80-100:** Your relationship is strong, with a healthy balance of individuality, emotional resilience, and open communication. Continue to nurture these strengths.
- **60-79:** Your relationship has a solid foundation, but there may be areas where you could enhance your emotional and sexual connection. Consider focusing on improving communication and emotional resilience.
- **40-59:** Your relationship could benefit from more attention to personal growth, differentiation, and emotional connection. Discuss ways to support each other in these areas.
- **Below 40:** It may be time to address significant issues in your relationship. Consider seeking additional resources or professional guidance to help improve your emotional and sexual intimacy.

Discussion and Reflection:

After completing the assessment, come together with your partner to discuss your scores. Use these questions to guide your conversation:

- **What are our strengths as a couple in terms of intimacy and differentiation?**
- **Which areas could use more attention or improvement?**
- **How can we better support each other's personal growth and emotional resilience?**
- **What steps can we take to enhance our sexual connection and keep the passion alive?**



Final Thoughts: This assessment is a tool to help you and your partner understand and address the dynamics in your relationship. By focusing on differentiation, emotional resilience, and open communication, you can build a stronger, more intimate connection.

For more resources and support, visit [CoupleStrong](http://CoupleStrong.com).



7-Day Intimacy and Desire Challenge for Couples

Inspired by "Intimacy and Desire" by Dr. David Schnarch

Challenge Overview: This 7-day challenge is designed to help you and your partner deepen your emotional and sexual connection, inspired by the principles in *"Intimacy and Desire."* Each day focuses on activities that encourage personal growth, communication, and rekindling passion in your relationship. By participating in this challenge, you'll be taking important steps to enhance your intimacy and strengthen your bond.

Day 1: Reflect on Individuality

Objective: Understand the importance of maintaining your sense of self within your relationship.

Activity:

- Spend 15-20 minutes reflecting individually on how you maintain your sense of self in your relationship. Consider how you balance your personal needs and desires with your connection to your partner.
- Write down your thoughts and any areas where you feel you could improve your sense of individuality.
- Share your reflections with each other, discussing how you can both support each other's individuality while staying connected.

Reflection: How does maintaining a strong sense of self contribute to a healthier relationship? What can you do to better support each other's individuality?



Day 2: Open Up About Desire

Objective: Communicate openly about your sexual desires and any challenges you may be facing.

Activity:

- Set aside 30 minutes for an open and honest conversation about your sexual relationship. Discuss your desires, any discrepancies in your sex drives, and how you can work together to meet each other's needs.
- Use "I" statements to express your feelings (e.g., "I feel most connected to you when..."), and listen actively to your partner's perspective.
- End the conversation by setting one or two mutual goals to improve your sexual connection.

Reflection: How did this conversation help you understand each other's desires better? What steps can you take to address any challenges you discussed?

Day 3: Practice Eyes-Open Intimacy

Objective: Strengthen your emotional connection during intimate moments.

Activity:

- During your next intimate encounter, practice keeping your eyes open and maintaining eye contact with your partner. Focus on staying present and emotionally connected throughout the experience.
- If either of you feels uncomfortable, gently discuss what you're feeling and continue as you feel comfortable.
- Afterward, talk about how this experience felt and how it affected your emotional connection.

Reflection: What did maintaining eye contact during intimacy reveal about your emotional connection? Did it help you feel more present and connected?



Day 4: Build Emotional Resilience

Objective: Develop emotional resilience to enhance your relationship.

Activity:

- Reflect individually on recent situations where you felt emotionally challenged in your relationship. How did you handle these situations? What could you have done differently?
- Share your reflections with your partner, discussing how you can both work on becoming more emotionally resilient.
- Identify one or two strategies for managing your emotions more effectively, such as taking a pause before reacting or practicing deep breathing.

Reflection: How can improving emotional resilience benefit your relationship? What steps can you take to support each other in becoming more emotionally resilient?

Day 5: Reignite Passion

Objective: Take action to rekindle the passion in your relationship.

Activity:

- Plan a special date night focused on reigniting the passion between you. This could be a romantic dinner, a new activity you've wanted to try together, or a night dedicated to intimacy.
- Focus on being fully present with each other, letting go of distractions and daily stresses.
- Use this time to reconnect physically and emotionally, making an effort to prioritize each other's pleasure and enjoyment.

Reflection: How did this special evening impact your connection? What new elements can you incorporate into your regular routine to keep the passion alive?



Day 6: Support Each Other's Growth

Objective: Encourage each other's personal growth and development.

Activity:

- Spend 15-20 minutes individually thinking about areas where you'd like to grow, whether it's personal hobbies, career goals, or emotional development.
- Share your goals with your partner and discuss how you can support each other in achieving them.
- Make a plan to check in regularly on each other's progress and celebrate successes together.

Reflection: How does supporting each other's personal growth strengthen your relationship? What specific actions can you take to help each other grow?

Day 7: Reflect and Plan for the Future

Objective: Consolidate the insights gained during the challenge and plan how to continue growing together.

Activity:

- Sit down together and reflect on the past week. Discuss what you've learned about each other and your relationship.
- Identify the activities that were most impactful and how you can incorporate them into your regular routine.
- Set a few goals for continuing to enhance your emotional and sexual connection in the coming months.

Reflection: What has been the most valuable takeaway from this challenge? How can you continue to build on the progress you've made this week?

Final Thoughts:

Congratulations on completing the 7-Day Intimacy and Desire Challenge! By focusing on differentiation, communication, emotional resilience, and passion, you've taken significant steps toward deepening your connection and strengthening your relationship. Remember, intimacy is an ongoing journey—keep exploring, growing, and nurturing your bond.

For more tips, resources, and support on your relationship journey, visit [CoupleStrong](http://CoupleStrong.com).



Description

Intimacy and Desire Relationship Enhancement Bundle

This comprehensive bundle is designed to help couples deepen their emotional and sexual connection, inspired by Dr. David Schnarch's book *"Intimacy and Desire: Awaken the Passion in Your Relationship."* The bundle includes:

- **Overview of the Book:** A detailed summary of the key concepts and insights from *"Intimacy and Desire,"* focusing on the emotional dynamics that influence sexual desire in long-term relationships.
- **Blog Post:** An engaging blog that explores how the principles from the book can help couples rekindle passion, improve communication, and build a stronger, more intimate connection.
- **Couple's Handout:** A practical guide offering actionable tips and exercises to help couples apply the book's teachings in their relationship, including techniques for differentiation, emotional resilience, and enhancing intimacy.
- **Couple's Assessment:** A self-assessment tool that allows couples to evaluate their emotional and sexual dynamics, providing a starting point for growth and deeper connection.
- **7-Day Intimacy and Desire Challenge:** A step-by-step challenge designed to help couples explore and enhance their emotional and sexual intimacy over the course of a week, focusing on communication, personal growth, and rekindling passion.

This bundle is perfect for couples looking to address issues of desire, strengthen their bond, and create a more fulfilling and passionate relationship using the insights and strategies from *"Intimacy and Desire."*