

## Dealing with Intimacy and Sexuality

Early on in a relationship passion comes very easily to most couples. But what happens to passion when you are three months into a relationship, 30 months in, or 30 years? When partners are emotionally accessible, responsive and engaged, sex becomes a safe adventure. The best recipe for good sex is a secure relationship where a couple can connect. If we want to have great sex in a long-term relationship, then we need emotional connection, and if we want to have emotional connection, we need great sex. What is emotional connection? How can we get emotionally connected?

**Jelena Sivulka** was born and raised in Serbia, where she got her master’s degree in psychology and a master’s degree in theology. She became a Christian 25 years ago and a few years later got involved in ministry with her husband Greg, planting churches, distributing humanitarian aid, and partnering with Joni and Friends, serving people with disabilities. Jelena has also worked as a counsellor in Serbia’s schools and a social worker, and she is currently working as therapist in a medical clinic. She is the founder and director of the non-profit organization Hana's Hope. She has been blessed with three children: Benjamin, Sara, and Hana, who has autism.

### I. Introduction

#### A. The drama of connection and disconnection

Intimacy vs. Sex

#### B. Canary in the Mine

- Sex and Intimacy, and relationship satisfaction
- Why couples seek therapy?

### II. Beautifully created

*“In the image of God he created them; male and female he created them.”*

Gen.1:27

#### A. Stages of sexual development

Stage	Critical learning	Impact on sexual adjustment
Infancy	Bonding	Capacity for intimacy
Toddlerhood	Touching, Naming and Controlling of genitals	Positive acceptance of genitals
Preschool	Question asking	Open communication regarding sexuality
School age	Exploration	Sexual awareness
Preadolescence	Erotic feelings and bumbling discovery	Self acceptance and competence in relating to opposite sex
Adolescence	Decision making	Taking responsibility for own sexuality

#### B. Gender differences, microwaves and slow cookers

##### 1. The body and how it works

2. Sexual response
3. Sexual dysfunctions
4. Not so different theory

### III. Path to connection

- A. Emotional openness
- B. Trust
- C. Respect
- D. Open enjoyment

“Practice and emotional presence make perfect.”

### IV. Sex therapy for dummies

- a. From general to specific
- b. Normalizing statements
- c. Open-ended questions
- d. Client is the relationship
- e. Covering every aspect (Biological, Psychological, Relational, Family background, Spiritual...)

### V. Church classroom for sexual education - “I just think the whole thing is weird!”

- A. Trinity: The primacy of love
- B. Married or Single - the High Calling

C. Teaching our children

“The 12 Principles of Christian Sex education in the Family”  
by Stanton L. Jones

***Suggested Readings:***

Collins, Gary R., *Counseling for Sexual Disorders*: Word Incorporated, 1990.  
Johnson, Sue, *Hold Me Tight*, New York, NY: Little, Brown and Company, 2008.  
Jones, Stanton L., *A Theology of Sexuality and Its Applications to Therapy and Sex Education*, Wheaton College, 2018