

Step 6

Intimate Negotiations

Long Term Intimacy Course



Module 6: Intimate Negotiations

Throughout this course, you both gained an insight into the extent and types of intimacy you may desire, want and need in your relationship. Remember the lists you drew up in Step 2? It's now time to expand on these and think about the intimate side of your relationship as a whole. This is the best way to make sure that each party gets what they want in the future.

This is the final Step. It incorporates the practical exercise, which you can do completely at your own pace.

So, it's time to put emotions aside and treat this like a business contract. This way, your emotions won't get damaged later on. This Step is designed to help you negotiate the best terms for you and your future relationship. You will learn how to speak your mind so that you don't hurt the other and how to get what you want/need without ignoring your partner's desires and needs. In fact, you are going to negotiate an intimacy contract and sign it.

Please note that the Phases detailed below don't have a timeline. This is because everyone needs different spells of time to accommodate to the realities of a new dynamic or relationship and everything that it entails. Furthermore, busy schedules need to be factored in when establishing your very own timeline. The general advice here is to take all the time you need to make sure that you understood everything and agree to it, as well as allow the same courtesy to your partner. This negotiation process may take anywhere from a few hours for those who already know each other very well or are extremely compatible to a few weeks or months for those who are indecisive and have busy schedules.

The good news is that nobody's rushing you (if someone tries to do this, don't allow it!). Read the Phases below and pace yourselves. You have all the time in the world to explore each other.

Phase 1: Your List

Write a detailed list of your needs and wants pertaining to the intimate part of your relationship.

Needs are your non-negotiables. Wants are things you would like, but are open to compromise on.

You can use the list you created in Step 2 and expand on it. Alternatively, you may use the [Contract template included in the download section of this Step](#), to give you ideas on the types of issues you may like to cover.

Phase 2: Compare and Contrast the Lists

Before doing the actual negotiation of the lists, you need to make sure that each partner understands his/her needs and those of the other. In a nutshell, you could say that this is both about knowing yourself and about knowing your partner. Once you are certain that each party has put everything they need or want on the list, you can begin reading them.

It is very important to clearly understand both lists and see how they fit together because this is the best indication that you have at this point about how your relationship will be. So, you may



want to see if you have things in common, similar interests and expectations. Because this is a very important phase, you may want to take some time to think about it. According to your own pace, this “time” may be a short coffee break or even a few days. BUT you should not hurry this process (or let the other party hurry you); if you need more time, explain this politely and argue that this is a perhaps the most important agreement that you will make in your life and you want to do it right.

If you are uncertain about what certain items on your partner’s list mean, don’t go home and Google them, ask them. Sure, a search engine knows about all things sexual, but you don’t want an objective definition, you want to know what it means to the other and why did they list a certain request. This will help you understand them better, as well as decide if you can live with those terms.

Do you think that anything on the list should be more clearly stated? Ask for it. For instance, let’s say that the partner specifies anal play as one of the interests; maybe you’re not very into anal sex, but you’re not completely opposed to it. Instead of trying to cross it off the list completely, ask about the expected frequency. This might be easier to bargain with. But remember, this is not a bargaining time – you just need to ask the questions now about what their expectations are.

Once you have everything on the list figured out and you’ve given it enough thought, you are ready to move to the next phase.

Phase 3: Open Negotiations

This is the phase where the parties exchange views. Some people might call it “arguing”, but the aim here is for both partners to be happy with the outcome, so a more fitting name would be “collaborative negotiation”.

In this phase, you get to express your dissatisfaction with certain things on your partner’s list. This is the most “exciting” part of the whole process. It’s also extremely important for the final outcome. This is where you exchange bargaining chips and draw the first draft of what your relationship agreement will look like. So pay attention to every word you are saying, or you might lose important points. Here are some tips on how to be successful in the opening of negotiations:

- Be assertive and present your arguments clearly. Under no circumstances should you use double-meaning words and leave room for misinterpretation.
- Keep calm. If things don’t go your way, getting into a heated argument (or calling each other names) will only make it worse. Besides, someone who manages to keep their cool under pressure is pretty intimidating.
- If there is any tension, try to reduce it. A joke always clears the air.



- Your non-verbal language says a lot, so be careful with it. Don't use your hands to gesticulate too much, try to keep the palms open and facing up (it depicts honesty) and keep an upright, dignified position.
- Don't forget about empathy. This is not negotiating a merger; this is your future with the person you really care about. Try to walk a mile in the other party's shoes and understand where their requests are coming from. You might find them reasonable after all. If not, empathy also serves to create compelling arguments using your very "opponent's" viewpoint – yes, it's just like beating someone with their own guns.
- Never forget your final goal: you both want to enter or enhance this relationship, you are just searching for the ideal way of doing it. Don't treat the other as if he/she were your mortal enemy.
- Respond to arguments by emphasizing certain benefits for the other party and minimizing them for you.

Let's apply this on an example: your partner states that he/she needs sexual relief at least four times per week. He/she has a much higher libido than yours. You however, may only be interested in sexual intimacy once a week. Some of your arguments might be:

- "Even though I love to spend intimate time with you, my libido is just so much lower than yours. A quality session with you once a week would be much more special and pleasurable to me. You may of course, relieve you tension at any time and just knowing you are satisfied is still hot for me. Perhaps you could even give me naughty details of your solo sessions" This type of argument is empathetic and it maximizes the benefits of the other party.
- "The anticipation of a highly sexually charged encounter with you at the end of a boring work week would increase my sexual wanting. It would enable me to enjoy this time with you so much more" This shows commitment and the willingness to dedicate the best of your libido to your partner.
- "In addition, once a month we could plan an extra special encounter or once a week, we could have a quickie/erotic massage/oral sex." The willingness to compromise is very important. Saying something like this shows that you will stand your ground, but you are not inflexible.

On the other hand, the person with the higher libido can also pull some aces out of his/her sleeve:

- "If it's lack of time that's making you shy away from intimacy, I can take care of more chores." – this reinforces the whole fundament behind a long term relationship – a partnership where you share responsibilities and look after one another's needs.



- “I am worried that we’ll lose intimate connection and we’ll miss out on a lot of pleasure that we can give each other.” This emphasizes your partner’s importance in your sexual realm and it also gives him/her an incentive to increase sexual participation.
- “Yes, I’m open to you allowing me solo sessions, but I worry about how this will interfere with our sexual connection/intimacy. I want to feel close to you when engaging in sexual activities. Would you consider having a quickie/erotic massage/oral sex once a week before work? That way we can feel connected without having a week apart sexually?” This mirrors the compromising argument of the party with low libido (see above).

In this phase, active listening is of the utmost importance. Don’t just wait for the other party to finish what they were saying so that you can begin your counter-arguments. REALLY listen to them. Ask questions when you feel like you didn’t quite grasp what they were trying to convey. This is not a phase in which you make decisions; this is a phase in which you present your arguments and take those of the other party into consideration.

Phase 4: Explore

By now, each of you has spoken out his/her concerns and you are almost ready to reach an agreement. Give this phase the importance it deserves; understand that this is when the cards are actually being dealt, so tread carefully. Beware: irrespective of how easy the early stages might have seemed to you, egos are bound to have been bruised and dissatisfactions to have emerged. There are a few things you can do in order to re-establish a trusting atmosphere:

- Focus on the things you agree on for a while. This will remind your partner of the reasons why you are together and why you should strive to reach mutually satisfying accord.
- Compromise. Just like in the example above where there’s a libido mismatch and the latter stages allow for solo sessions and additional intimate time, everything can be compromised upon. However, try to maintain a balance. Partners should always meet half-way, not try to manipulate each other into agreeing to terms they loathe.
- Be realistic. Understand that no agreement can alter someone’s essence completely.
- Keep moving forward. This phase is not a stagnant one; on the contrary, it needs to be as dynamic as possible. Don’t get stuck on bargaining on a single thing forever; if you reached a dead end, move on to the next one and revisit the problematic one later. Putting a bit of time between you and the problem may offer you some perspective.

Let’s say that the thing you can’t agree on is swinging or attending play parties – you want it, while your partner disagrees. This is a very sensitive topic and it is not wise to insist on it. Even more, insisting on it may be viewed as an abuse of trust by the other party, which may scare him/her off completely. You need to understand that agreeing to enter a monogamous



relationship is very different from the prospect of agreeing to sexually sharing your partner with others.

So, instead of insisting on something like this (if it's a want, rather than a need), you can let it go for the moment. Dropping an item altogether shows your goodwill and may bring you more in the long run (the other party might feel more inclined to make concessions in response to yours). The best part about things like this is that you can revisit later. You can never know how your partner will evolve; after a year or less, he/she may be the one asking you to have a threesome. Thus, you may conclude this argument by saying something along these lines: "OK, no sharing for now and we'll never do it unless you totally agree with it, but promise you'll keep an open mind." Such a request is very hard to refuse because you are asking for very little. However, also be prepared that your partner may never come around.

Phase 5: Can I get this in Writing?

Don't jump to conclusions; despite the title, this is not the final Phase of the negotiation process, but we are getting closer. This is, if you will, the draft of the final agreement or the phase in which you formalize everything that's been discussed so far.

The importance of this stage stems from its formalization purpose. During the negotiations, many things have been said and some of them may have already been forgotten or overlooked. Thus, you have an entire Phase to review everything and make sure that you are both OK with what is going to be committed to paper.

Building on a previous example, in this phase you should formulate statements like: "OK, so we established that, as for frequency, we'll leave every Friday free for a night of intimacy. During the week, you are allowed to pleasure yourself. You must give me the dirty details if I ask and also try to make it interesting for me. No watching of pornography is allowed during these solo masturbation sessions. If you insist, then I agree to mutual masturbation/oral sex/a quickie on Tuesday mornings before work. Also, if we both feel like spontaneous sex, this is always allowed. Did I get this right?" Ideally, you should go through this process with every "hot" topic or every topic that was debated and not agreed upon immediately. It's the best way to ensure that everyone REALLY gets what they wanted.

This is also the last phase in which you can trade your bargaining chips. For instance, you can offer a package deal: "I am willing to learn erotic dancing and wear sexy lingerie while cleaning the house if you take me out to dinner once a week and flirt with me."

During this phase, you should feel empowered and have all the necessary tools to get what you want. You've already spent enough time listening to the other party, so now you know what is more important to them. In other words, you know which items on the list are negotiable and which are set in stone. All that you need to do is formulate your demands eloquently and "make him/her an offer he/she can't refuse". You know, just like Don Corleone, it can't be too hard.

Phase 6: Seal the Deal

Yes, you're finally done. You now have everything you need to fill out and sign the actual contract ([download the sample Contract in this module](#)): you know each other's wishes and



