

THE *Dream* HOME: Essential Techniques
for Helping Couples Increase
Marital Intimacy

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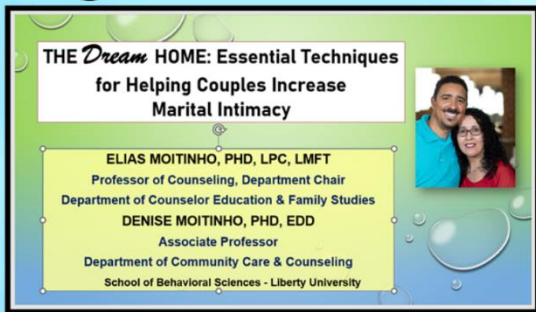
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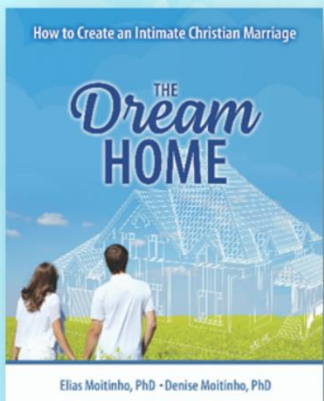
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OBJECTIVE 1. Describe multidimensional intimacy in Christian marriage from biblical, biopsychosocial-spiritual, and multisensory perspectives



DEFINING INTIMACY

- **“To Know and to be Known”**
- It requires self-disclosure, vulnerability, trust, acceptance, and kindness.
- **The PAIR inventory** (Personal Assessment of Intimacy in Relationships)
 - identified five types of intimacy: emotional, social, sexual, intellectual, and recreational. (Schaefer & Olson, 1981)

A photograph of a wedding couple standing in a grassy field at sunset. The groom is on the left, wearing a dark blue suit, and the bride is on the right, wearing a white lace wedding dress. They are holding hands and looking towards each other. The background shows rolling hills and a sunset sky.

A Biblical Perspective

For this reason a man shall leave his father and his mother, and be joined to his wife; and they shall become one flesh.

Genesis 2:24 NASB

Biblical - In the Garden/Outside the Garden

- **In the Garden** (Genesis 2:24-25)

- **Covenant**

- **Leaving** = A Public Act

- **Joining/Cleaving** = A Private Act

**God's design
remains the same!**

- **Outside the Garden** (Ephesians 5:31)

- The Greek word Paul uses has been translated as “be joined” (NASB), “be united” (NIV), or “hold fast” (ESV), which means **gluing or cementing** two things together

A modern bedroom with a white bed, a nightstand with a vase of white tulips, and a lamp.

Sexual Intimacy

And the man and his wife were both
naked and were not ashamed.

Genesis 2:25 NASB



A Biblical Perspective on Sexual Intimacy

- **Sexual pleasure is to be enjoyed in the context of heterosexual marriage**

(Gen. 2:24–25; Ex. 20:14; Prov. 5: 18–19; Heb. 13:4).

- **Sexual expression involves mutual responsibility and respect for the spouse**

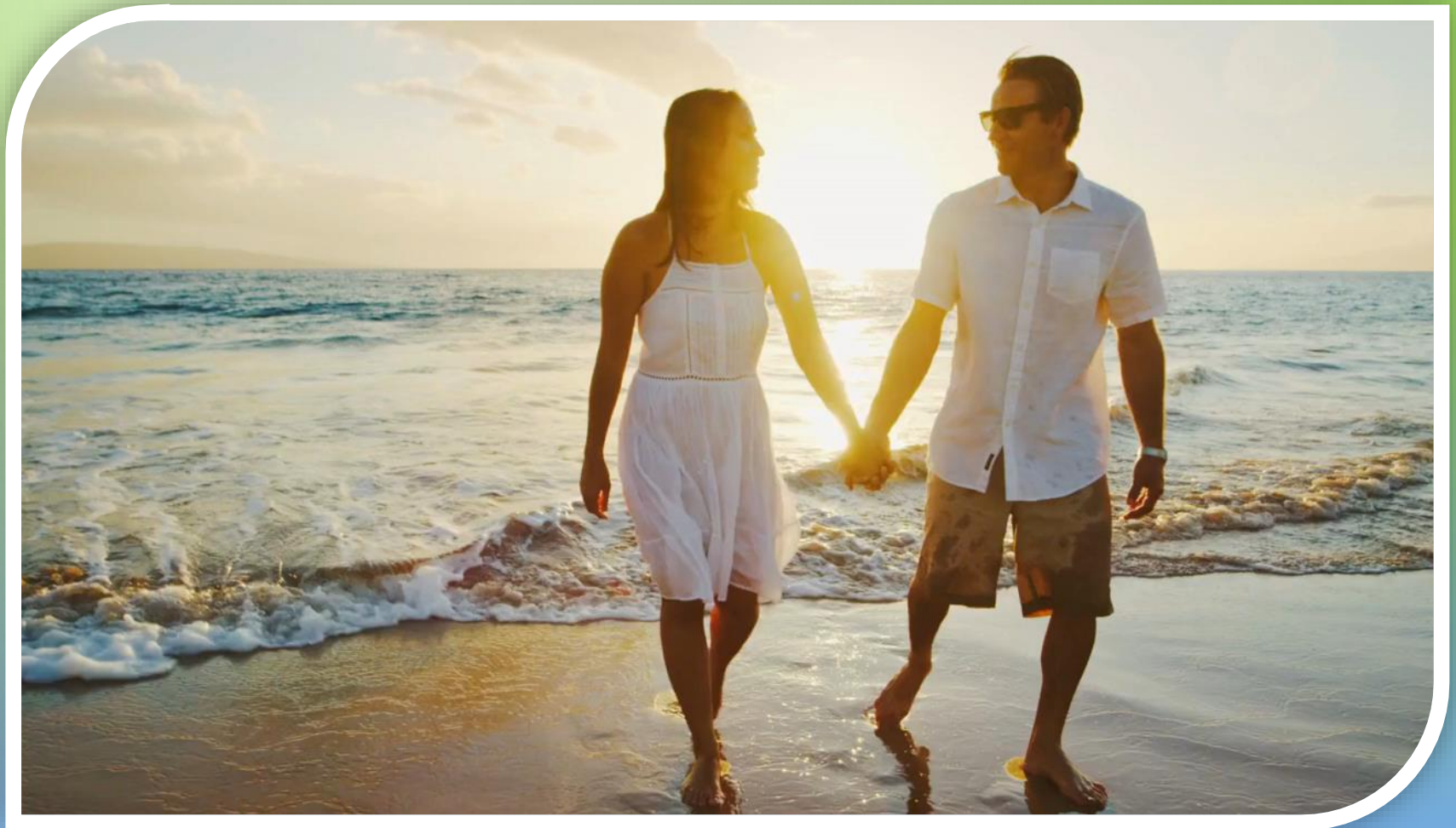
(1 Cor. 7:3–5)

- **Married couples must protect purity in their sexual relationship**

(Heb. 13:4 NIV).

MARRIAGE INTIMACY FROM A BIOPSYCHOSOCIAL-SPIRITUAL

- BIOLOGICAL
- PSYCHOLOGICAL
- SOCIAL
- SPIRITUAL



A Biological Perspective



- **Dopamine** – Produces a sense of **excitement**
- **Oxytocin (and vasopressin)** – Promote **bonding/attachment**
- **Adrenaline** – Increases heart rate, blood pressure, breathing, and muscle strength
- **Endorphins** – Reduces pain and stress
- **Serotonin** – “acts on the smooth muscles of the vascular system of the genitals and other sexual organs to produce vasoconstriction and vasodilatation” (Calabrò et al., 2019, p. 9).
- **Norepinephrine** – “stimulates penile erection” (Calabrò et al., 2019, p. 9).
- **Testosterone** – “involved in the early phase of romantic love” (de Boer et al., 2012, p. 118).

Calabrò, R. S., Cacciola, A., Bruschetta, D., Milardi, D., Quattrini, F., Sciarrone, F., la Rosa, G., Bramanti, P., & Anastasi, G. (2019). Neuroanatomy and function of human sexual behavior: A neglected or unknown issue? *Brain and Behavior*, 9(12), e01389. <https://doi.org/10.1002/brb3.1389>

de Boer et al. (2012). Love is more than just a kiss: a neurobiological perspective on love and affection. *Neuroscience*, 201, 114-124.

McIlhaney, Jr., J. S. & Bush, F. M. (2019). *Hooked: The brain science on how casual sex affects human development*. Moody Publishers.

Intimacy as a Multisensory Experience

- **Sight**

- Take care of the body
- Body image/self-esteem

- **Hearing**

- Positive communication/Affirmation (Song of Songs 4, 5)
- Music

- **Smell**

- Aromatherapy, fragrances

- **Taste**

- Creativity

- **Touching**


- Sensitivity



Ruesink, G. (2022). The role of multisensory integration and attention in sexual incentive salience. *The Journal of Sexual Medicine* 19.11.

Maister, L., Fotopoulou, A., Turnbull, O. (2020). The erogenous mirror: Intersubjective and multisensory maps of sexual arousal in men and women. *Arch Sex Behav* 49, 2919–2933. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s10508-020-01756-1>

A Psychological Perspective / Attachment (EFT)

ACCEPTANCE + SECURITY = SAFE HAVEN  BONDING

- **Intrapsychic/Phenomenological (within)**

How individuals process their experiences

- **Interpersonal (between)**

How spouses organize their interactions into patterns and cycles

- **Primary Emotions = Hurt, Fear of Rejection**

- **Secondary Emotions = Anger** (reaction to primary emotion)

Secondary emotions shape current negative interactions, and can be detrimental to attachment

Withdrawal is Emotional Disengagement

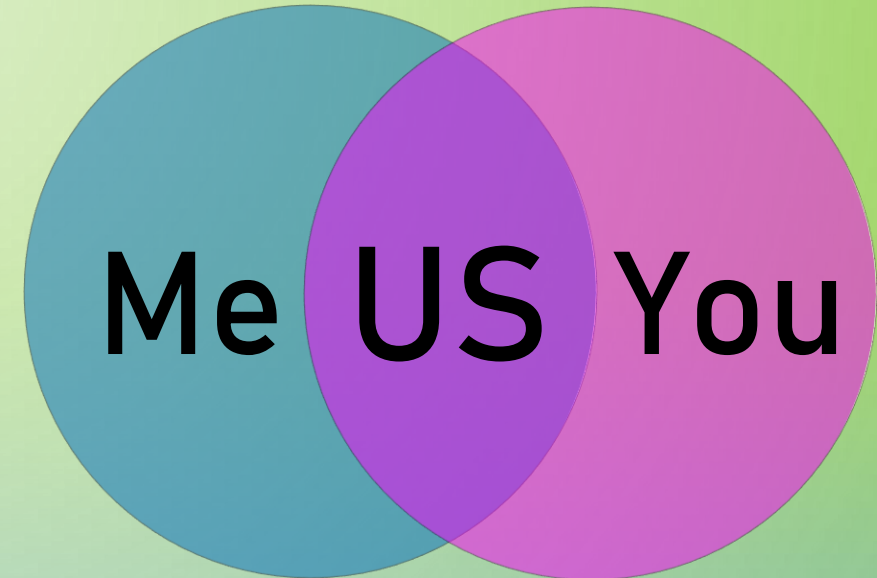
A Social Perspective / Systemic

A marriage has:

- Rules
- Roles
- Power structure
- Forms of communication
- Ways of problem solving
- Shared history
- Perceptions/assumptions
- Sense of purpose
- Emotional attachments
- Loyalty

Goldenberg, I. & Goldenberg, H. (2000, 2004, 2016). *Family therapy: An overview*. Belmont, CA: Wadsworth.

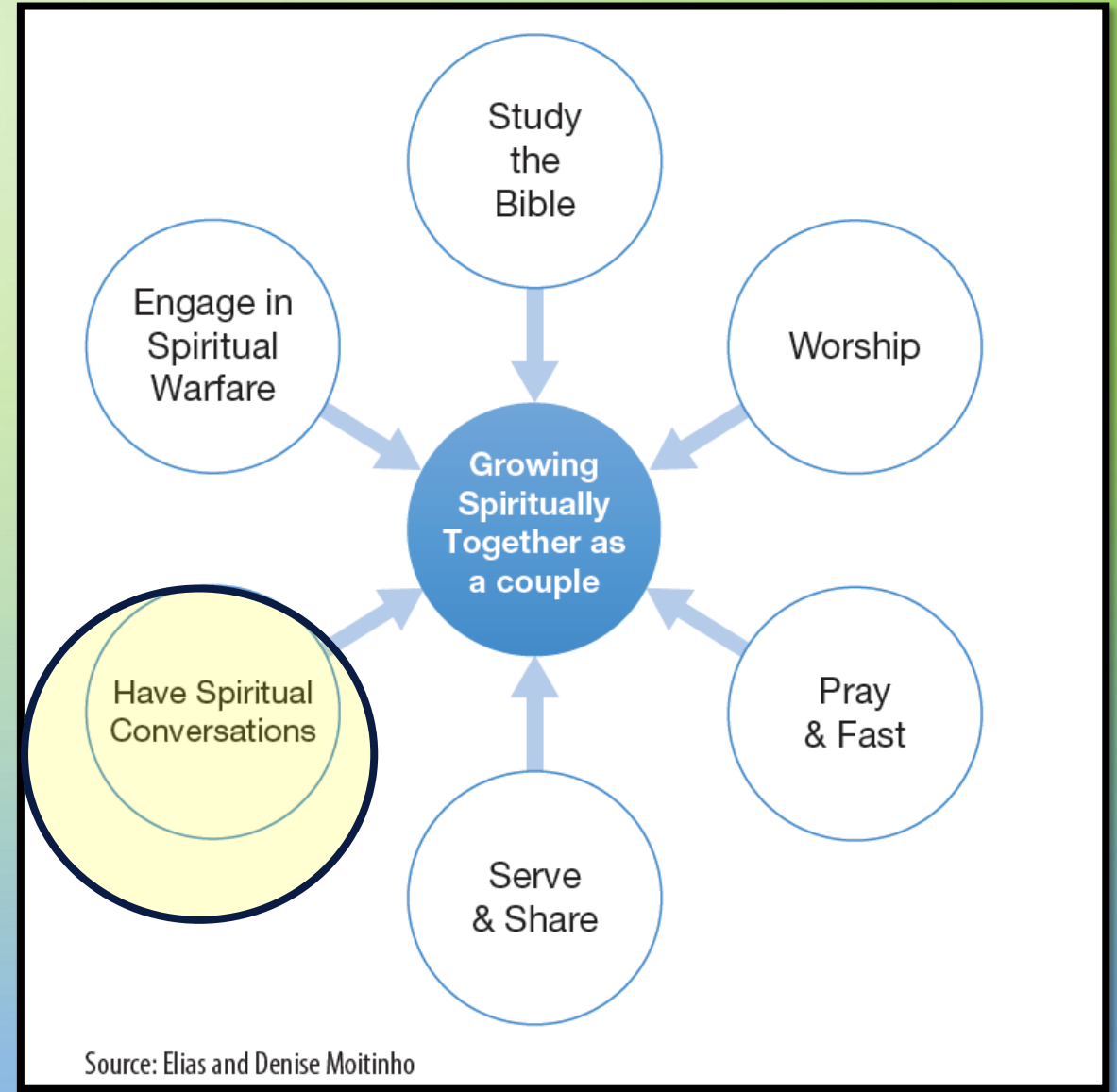
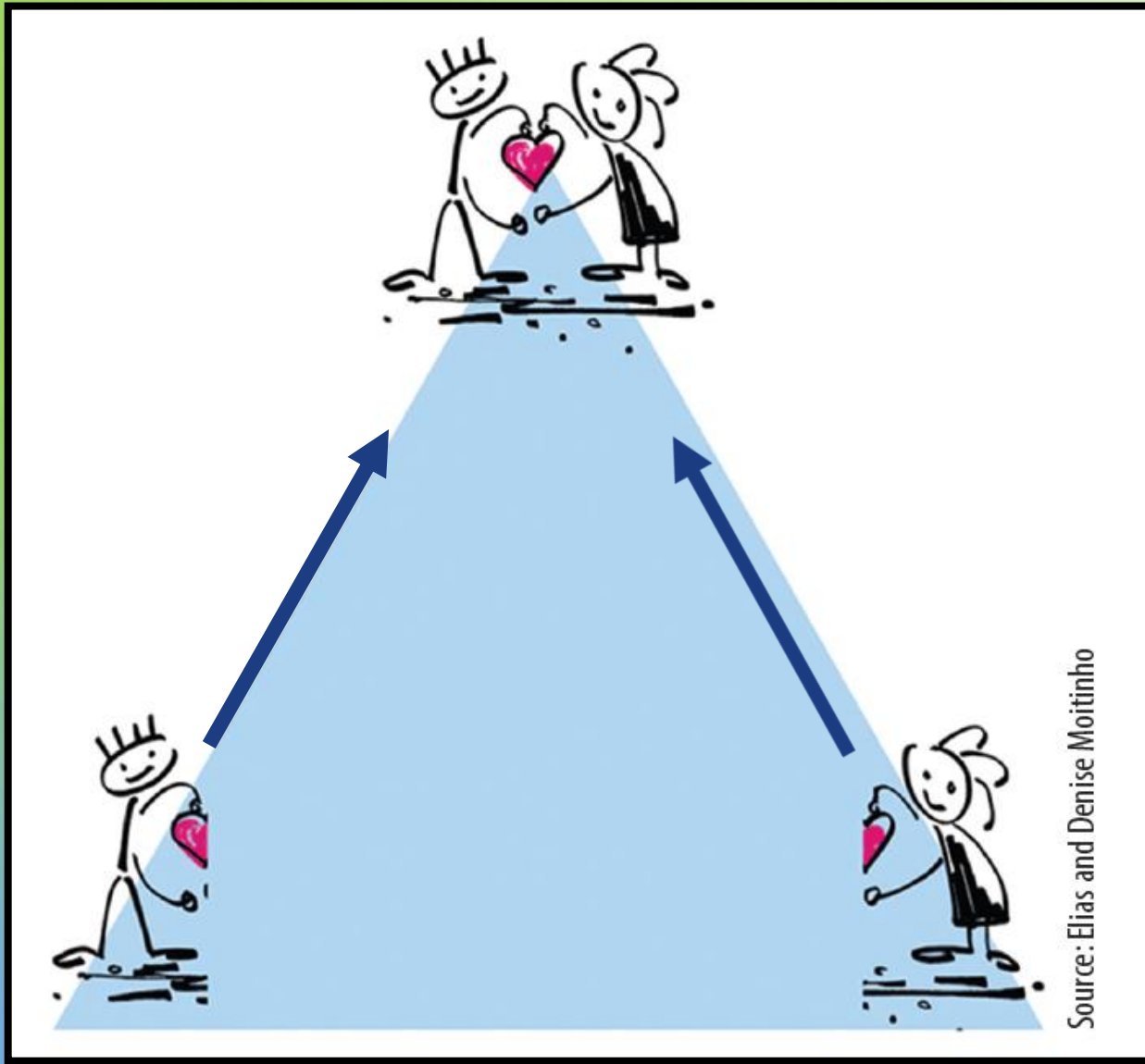
Couple Identity



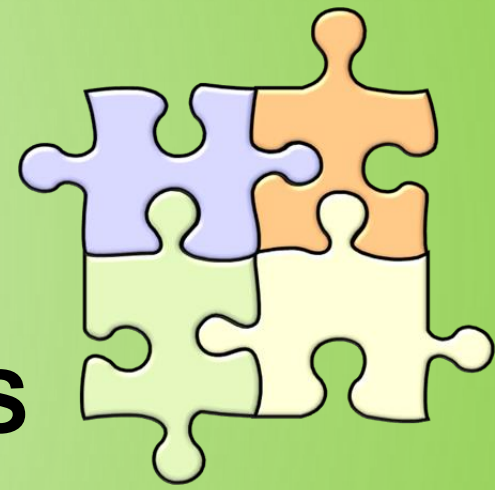
Intentional Selective Blending

An intentional and deliberate decision-making process to determine which elements from each culture (system) the couple would keep or discard.

A Spiritual Perspective



Multidimensional Intimacy



- **EMOTIONAL** - A Connection of the **HEARTS**
- **INTELLECTUAL** - A Connection of the **MINDS**
- **PHYSICAL** - A Connection of the **BODIES**
- **SPIRITUAL** - A Connection of the **SOULS**



Multifaceted Factors that Influence Sexual Intimacy

- Physical Health
- Medication Side Effects
- Mental Health
- Body Image and Self-Esteem
- Traumatic Past Experiences
- Busy Schedules
- Communication
- Pornography and Affairs





Everything that happens in each room influences what happens in the Master Bedroom

Moitinho, E. & Moitinho, D. (2020). *The dream home: How to create an intimate Christian marriage*. Kendall Hunt Publishing Company



OBJECTIVE 2: Identify metaphors that can help Christian couples gain insights into marital intimacy

METAPHORS, SIMILES, AND ANALOGIES

A Window into the Couple's World

- **Client-Generated Metaphors**
- **Couple-Generated Metaphors**



Metaphors provide a creative way to understand the couple's world, feelings, situations, frame of reference, and experiences.

“Phenomenological Interpretation”



Client-Generated

Metaphors, Similes, and Analogies

- “provide a lens into the internal world of clients that combines their emotional reactions and experiences in an understandable manner and creates a bridge so clients’ internal worlds can be shared with the counselor”

(Wagener, 2017, p. 153)

Client-Generated

- I broke down
- I'm crushed
- I'm in the pit
- I'm trapped
- I'm hitting my head against a wall
- I'm running in circles
- I've been crying like a baby lately
- I'm completely lost
- This marriage has been a really rough road
- My marriage is a test of patience
- Our marriage is headed nowhere

What do they mean?

Client-Generated Metaphors

CATEGORY	EXAMPLES
One's image of self	I'm a teakettle about to explode!
One's image of others	My husband's a locomotive barging into the house.
Relationship between self and self	My life is a barren wasteland.
One's image of situations	I keep beating myself up.
Relationship of self to another	Dealing with him, I'm trying to tame a wild lion.
Relationship of self to a situation	I'm slowly sinking in quicksand.

From:
Eckstein, D. & Russo, N. (2012)

Eckstein, D. & Russo, N. (2012). Six types of counseling related metaphors: Theory and case study demonstration. International Florida Adlerian Society 17th Annual Conference; Kopp, R. & Eckstein, D. (2004). Using early memory metaphors and client-generated metaphors in Adlerian therapy. *Journal of Individual Psychology*, 60(2), 163-174.

Counselor-Generated

Metaphors, Similes, and Analogies

“provide a tool to further guide and support clients in the pursuit of their goals”

(Wagener, 2017, p. 153)

TYPES OF METAPHORS

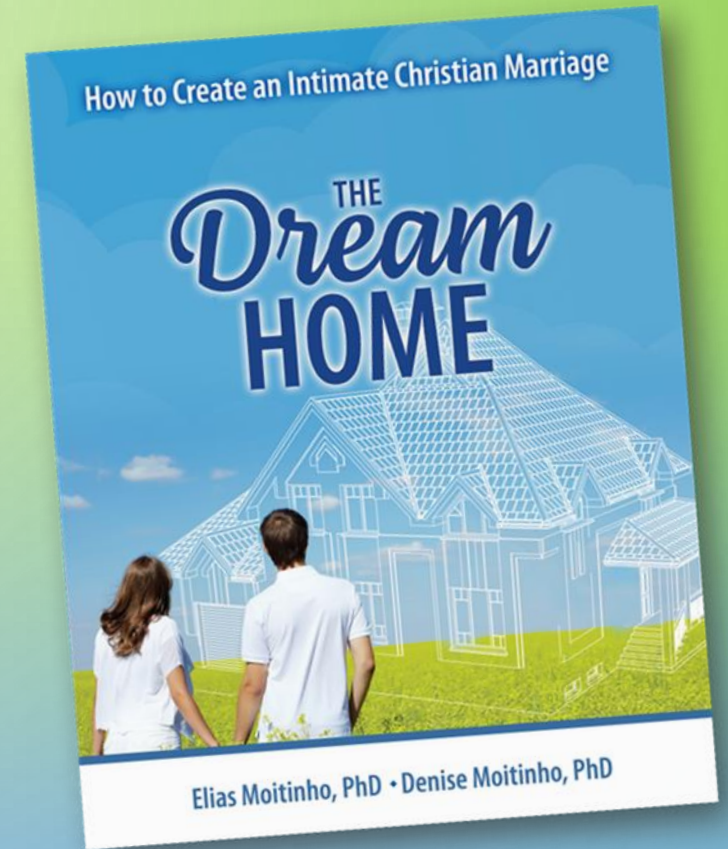
- **Universal themes**
- **Religion-based**
- **Culture-based**



Metaphors about Marital Intimacy: Marriage as a *Dream Home*

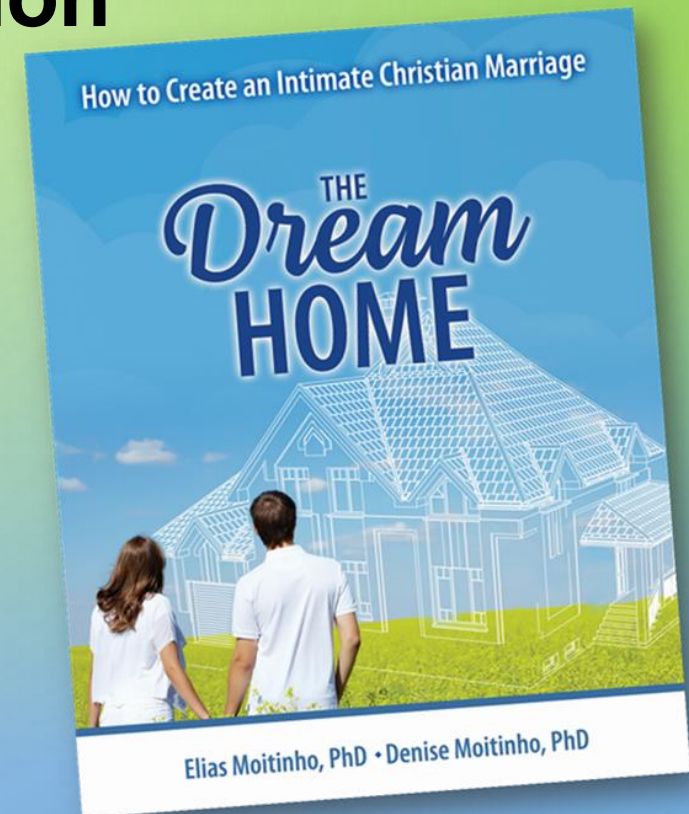
“We start our journey to create a dream home by going house hunting, finding the best location, and examining the curb appeal. Then, we enter the house and check out each room carefully. **By using metaphors and analogies, we make essential concepts about Christian marriage easier for you to understand.**”

(Moitinho & Moitinho, 2020, p. 2)



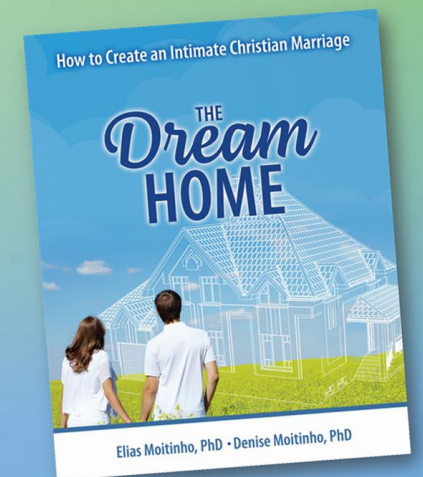
Metaphors about Marital Intimacy: Marriage as a *Dream Home*

- **House Hunters** = Creating a Shared Vision
- **Location** = Bringing Stability
- **Curb Appeal** = Creating a Reputation



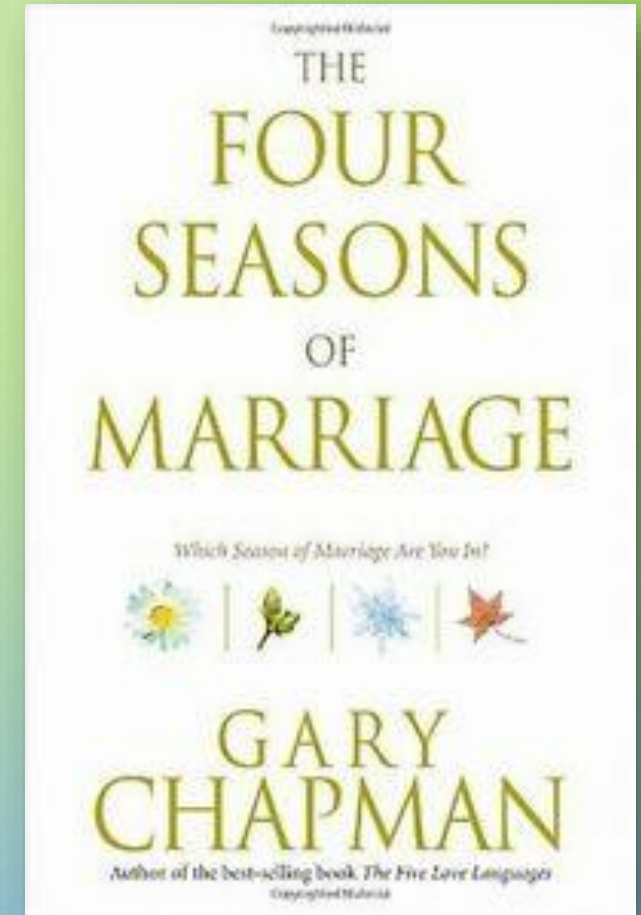
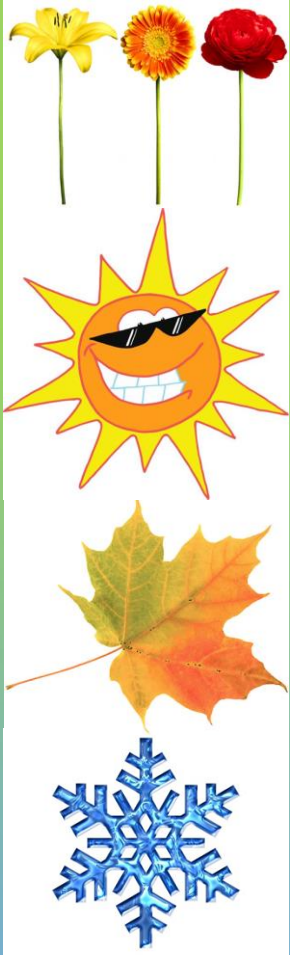
Metaphors about Marital Intimacy: Marriage as a Dream Home

- **Living Room** = Communicating Effectively
- **Kitchen & Dining** = Practicing Multidimensional Self-Care
- **Home Office** = Managing Finances
- **Laundry Room** = Cleaning up Conflict
- **Master Bedroom** = Enjoying Multidimensional Intimacy
- **Closet** = Growing Spiritually
- **Kids' Room** = Parenting with Purpose
- **Guest Room** = Practicing Christian Hospitality

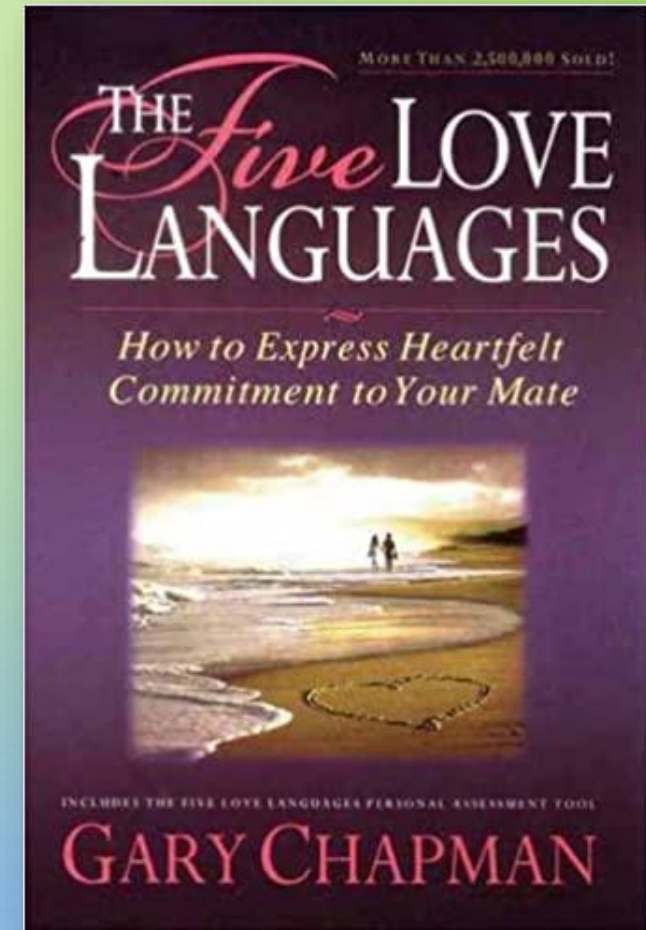
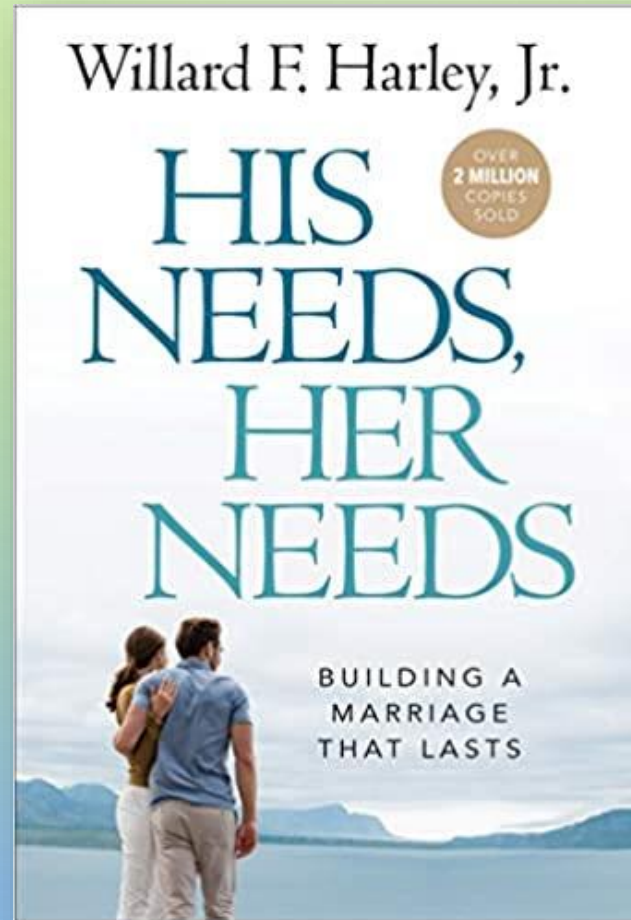
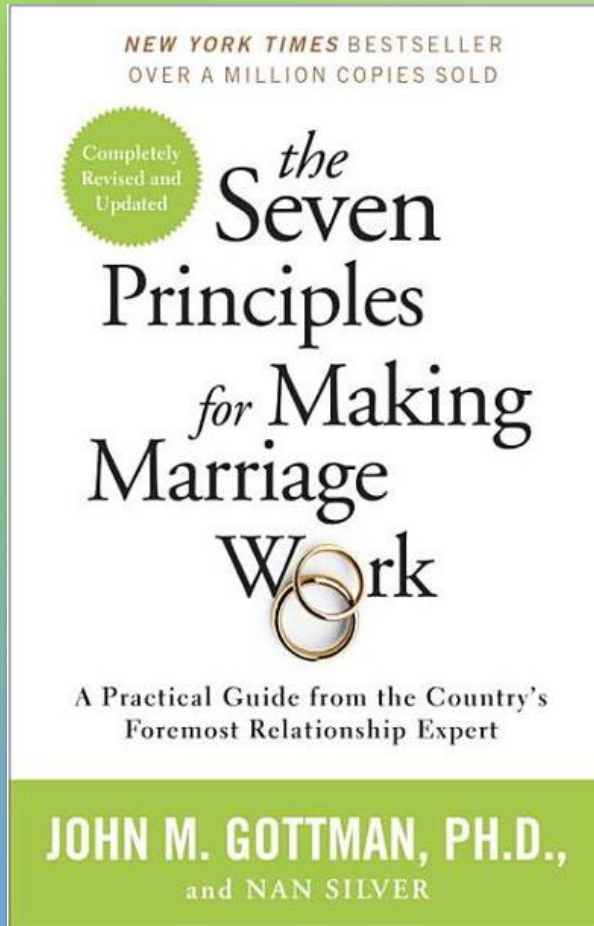


Metaphors about Marital Intimacy: Seasons of Marriage

- SPRING
 - Freshness, Hope, Anticipation
- SUMMER
 - Comfortable, Quiet, Enjoying life
- FALL
 - Uncertainty, Negligence, Fears
- WINTER
 - Discouraged, Separated, Dissatisfied



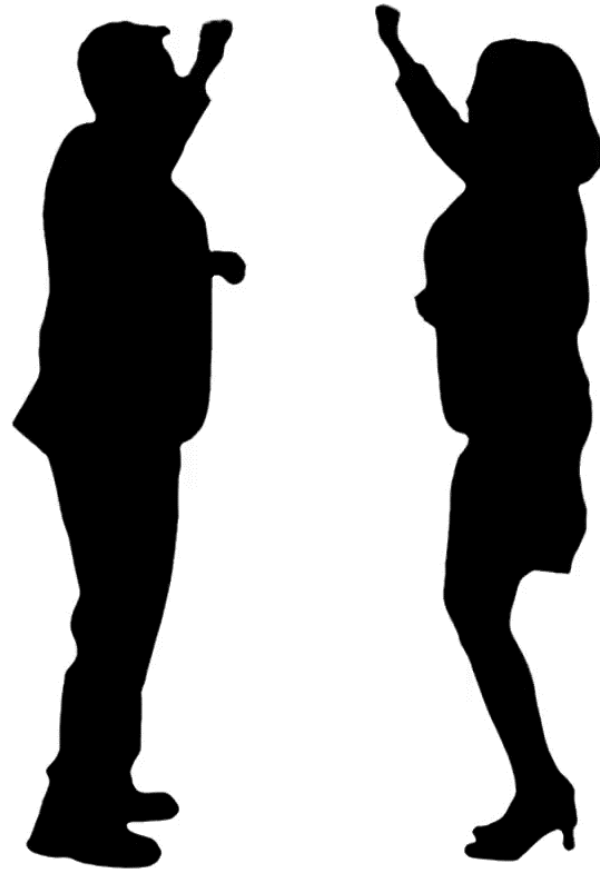
Metaphors about Marital Intimacy: Emotional Bank Account, Love Bank, Love Languages & Love Tank



Metaphors about Marital Intimacy: Marriage as a Dance “The Tango”- EFT

POSITIVE CYCLE

Safety
Security
Dependable
Trustworthy
Inner reality
(Cognitions)
Creates a
“soothing”



NEGATIVE CYCLE

DISTRESS

- **Security is threatened**

ANGER

- **Emotional**

Disengagement

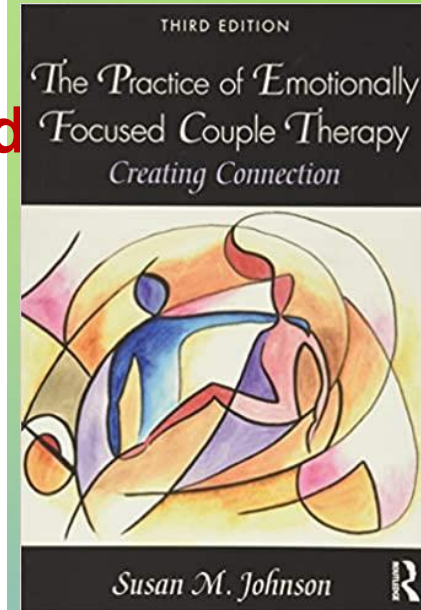
RIGID INTERACTIONS

- **How people Fight**

Criticize – pursue

Defend – withdraw

No “soothing”





OBJECTIVE 3: List strategies that mental health professionals, coaches, pastoral counselors, and church leaders can use to help Christian couples in professional marriage counseling and church ministry settings



Strategies For The Counseling Setting

STRATEGY #1: USE METAPHORS IN MARRIAGE COUNSELING

- **How couples respond to the metaphor**
 - Counselor can expand/explore the metaphor
 - Couple-generated
 - Counselor-generated
- **Assessment**
 - Assess feelings, thoughts, behaviors
 - Assess patterns of interactions
- **The Counselor can provide hope**
 - What would you like to try next?



STRATEGY #1: USE METAPHORS ABOUT MARITAL INTIMACY

An example: Marriage as a Journey/Road Trip

- **Vision & Goals**

- Where are you going?

- **Control**

- Who decides where to go?
- Who is driving? Backseat driving?

- **Trust**

- How do you feel about your spouse on the driver's seat?

- **Strategic Planning**

- How do you decide the route?
- Who decides on the stops?



- **Problem Solving**

- How do you handle unexpected situations?

Strategy #1: USE METAPHORS ABOUT MARITAL INTIMACY

An example: Marriage Is Like a Lawn

- **Assessing the Marriage**
 - What does the lawn look like?
- **Lawn Maintenance**
 - How do you care for and feed your lawn?
 - How often do you water, fertilize, kill weeds, and mow?
- **Weeds**
 - What are the weeds in our lawn?
 - How do you get rid of the weeds?

A Marriage is like a lawn.

Yes!

But, what if the lawn is dead?



STRATEGY #2: USE CHECKLISTS

CHECKLIST: OUR MASTER BEDROOM

Creating Multidimensional Intimacy

Please rate the extent to which you agree or disagree with the following statements:

Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Undecided	Agree	Strongly Agree
1	2	3	4	5

CHECKLIST: OUR LIVING ROOM

Effective Communication in Marriage

How often do you engage in the following behaviors?

Never	Rarely	Sometimes	Often	Always
1	2	3	4	5

STRATEGY #3: PROMOTE EMOTIONAL INTIMACY

Connecting the Hearts: Communicating & Creating a Vision

- Use the **G.I.F.T.S.** to help couples deepen their communication (5 Levels of Communication)
- Use the ***Loveseat***
 - Couple Time + Active Listening (Speaker-Listener Technique)
- Adapt ***The Miracle Question*** to Create a Shared Vision for Marriage

STRATEGY #4: PROMOTE INTELLECTUAL INTIMACY

Connecting the Minds: Sharing Your Intellect

- **A Phenomenological Approach**
 - Help the couple enter into each other's world (active listening)
 - Help the couple listen and grasp each other's individual vision, goals, and aspirations in life
- Help couples respect each other's ideas, intellect, and wisdom
- Help the couple set Social Media boundaries to protect the marriage
- Practice self-care together (enhancing each other's mental health)

STRATEGY #5: PROMOTE PHYSICAL INTIMACY

Connecting the Bodies: Expressing Passionate Love

- **Provide Psychoeducation**
 - Systemic Concept “**All Rooms affect the Bedroom**”
- Help the couple assess their Multidimensional intimacy
- Help the couple Discuss a **Biblical Worldview of Sexuality** in Marriage
 - Use our thinking “**Guide to Analyze Sexual Behaviors in Marriage**”
- Implement **Agape Love** positive daily behaviors

STRATEGY #6: PROMOTE SPIRITUAL INTIMACY

Connecting the Souls: Growing Spiritually Together

- Help the couple discover their approach to Spiritual Growth
- Help the couple determine how they can **practice Spiritual Disciplines together**
- Help the couple **engage in “Spiritual Conversations”**

Strategies for The Church Setting



LEVELS OF MINISTRY INTERVENTION FOR MARRIED COUPLES



STRATEGIES FOR CHURCH SETTING

Event-based vs Ongoing ministry

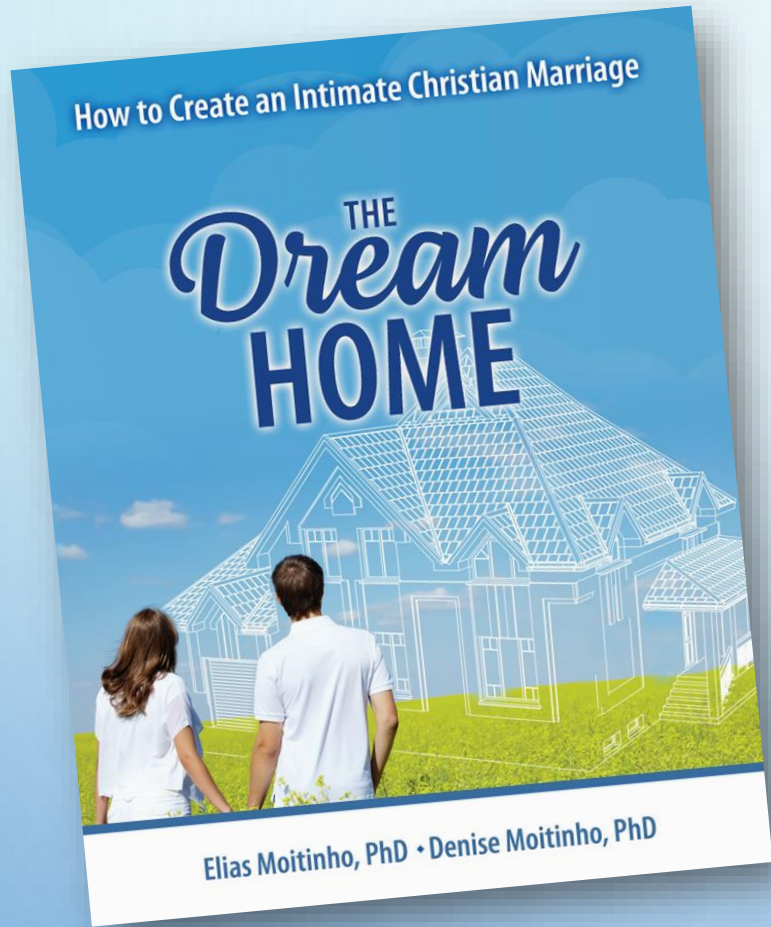
Proactive vs Reactive



- **Three-pronged approach**
 - **Educational** (Solid biblical teaching)
 - **Psychoeducational** (Educating on marriage dynamics)
 - **Experiential** (Activities to promote bonding)
- **Marriage classes 13-15 week** (fall/spring)
- **Marriage Enrichment Conferences** (Fri-Sat/weekend events)
- **Marriage workshops/seminars** (half a day events)
- **Mentoring** (ongoing)
- **Coaching** (ongoing)

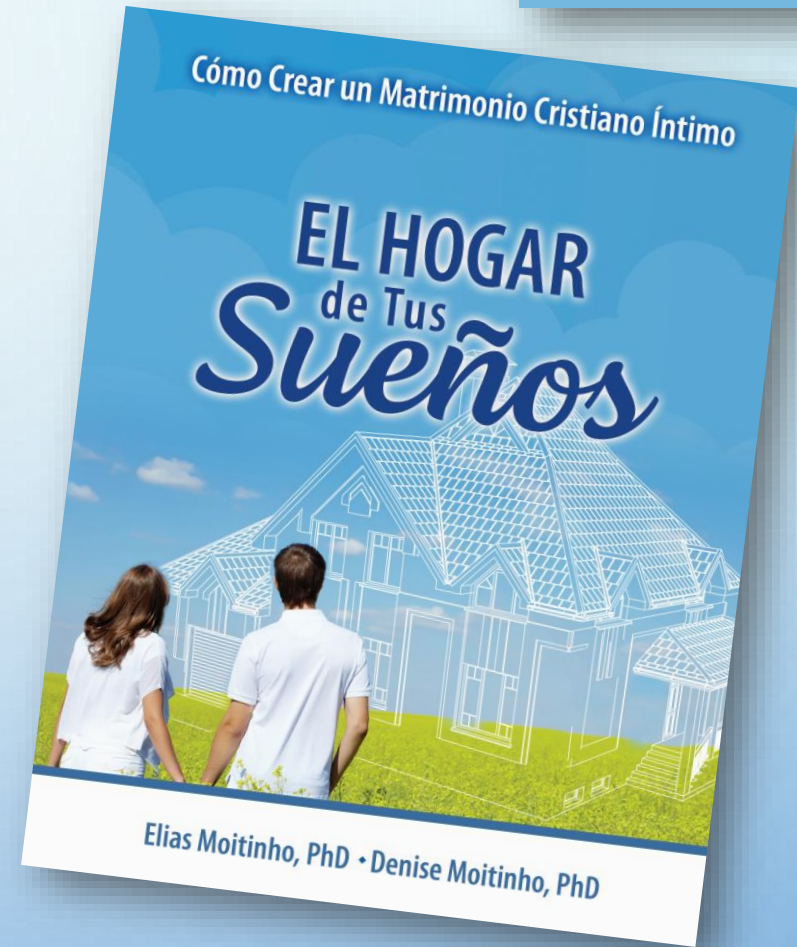
OUR BOOKS:

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<https://he.kendallhunt.com/product/dream-home-how-create-intimate-christian-marriage>

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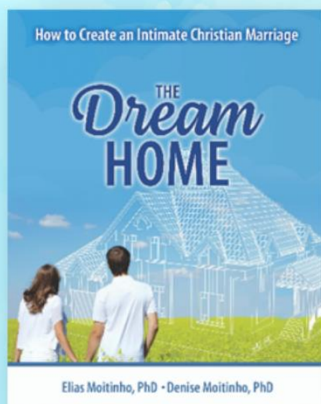
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