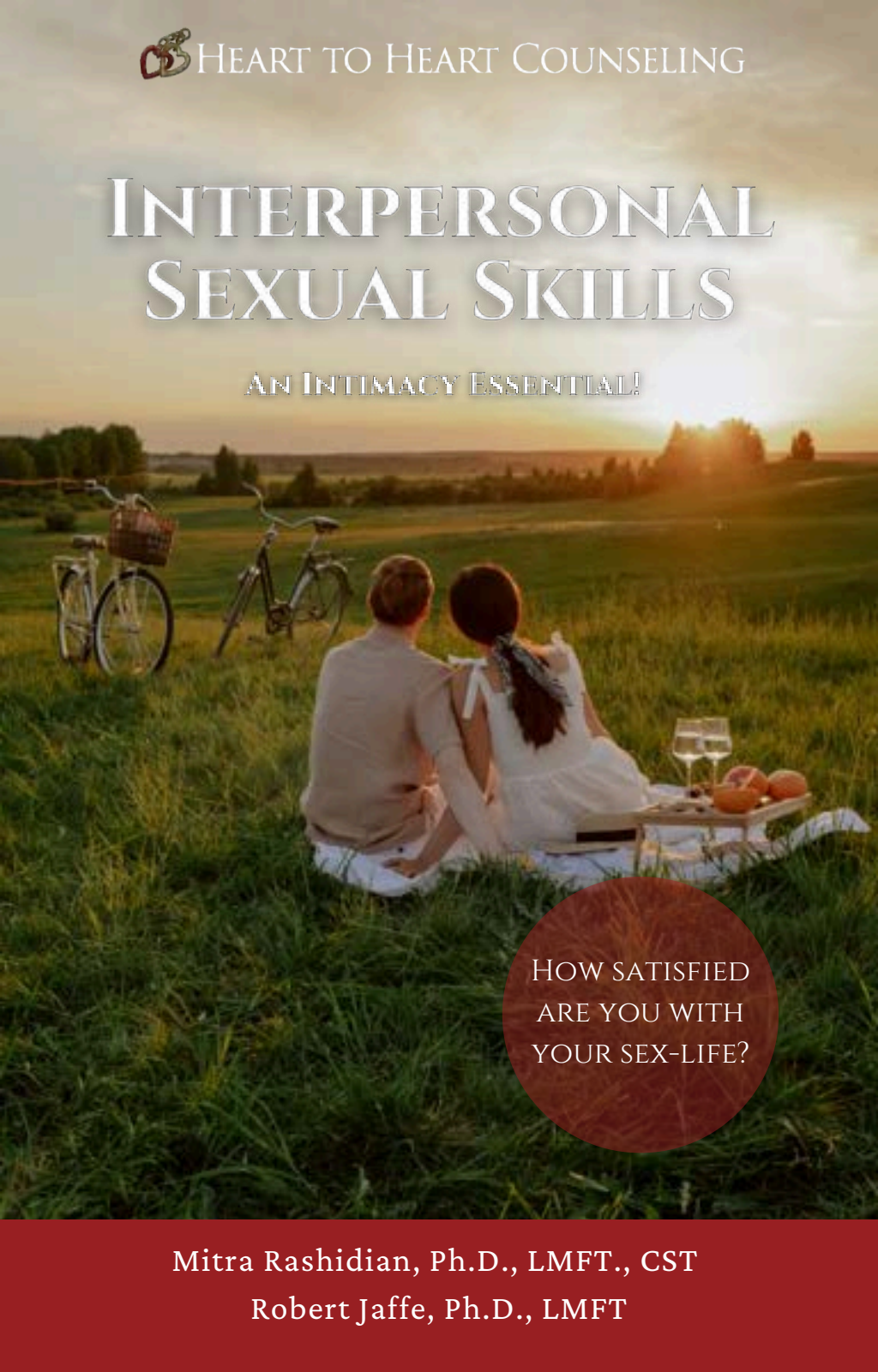


# INTERPERSONAL SEXUAL SKILLS

AN INTIMACY ESSENTIAL!

A romantic scene of a couple sitting on a white blanket in a lush green field at sunset. Two bicycles are parked nearby, and a picnic basket with fruit and wine is on the blanket. The sun is low on the horizon, creating a warm, golden glow.

HOW SATISFIED  
ARE YOU WITH  
YOUR SEX-LIFE?

Mitra Rashidian, Ph.D., LMFT., CST  
Robert Jaffe, Ph.D., LMFT

## INTERPERSONAL SEXUAL SKILLS... AN INTIMACY ESSENTIAL!

**What are your interpersonal sexual skills and how can they improve your intimate relationship?**

**U**nderstating yourself and your partner's sexuality enables you to give and receive to each other in your most intimate moments, the most transparent and divine moments of body and soul connection. At times, there are barriers that prevent that from happening. It is safe to say, that when we act from our loving heart, our chances of bridging the gap between each other, increases geometrically. What are some of the words and phrases we can use to ensure that we are acting from love? How do each of us experience our intimate sexual moments together?



**D**eveloping a high level of Interpersonal sexual skills, refers to the ability to communicate your sexual thoughts, feelings, beliefs, desires, and behaviors to your partner, while you are engaged in sex. This also applies to your ability to communicate while you are having a sexual discussion, without fear of criticism, judgement, or being ashamed.

**Do you feel connected with your partner on an intimate level, when the two of you engage sexually?**

My sexual beliefs are similar to those of my partner.

Yes No

My partner understands me sexually.

Yes No

My partner and I share the same sexual likes and dislikes.

Yes No

I feel comfortable during sex with my partner.

Yes No

My partner sexually pleases me.

Yes No

My partner and I communicate well during sex

Yes No

I meet my partner's sexual needs.

Yes No

My partner is sexually attracted to me.

Yes No

My partner and I enjoy the same frequency of sexual desire.

Yes No

My partner and I both feel comfortable with our bodies during sex

Yes No

**I**f your answer to the following includes three or more ‘No’s’, then this e-book was written for you. If you answered ‘No’ to less than three, *congratulations!* You still may benefit from reading on, since the information contained within MDRT dimensions, can help you move from *good sex* to *great sex*.

One main reason for lack of sexual compatibility among couples, is the lack of having insufficient interpersonal sexual skills.



*Interpersonal Sexual Skills* are related to knowing who your partner and yourself are, as sexual beings. Here, developing a high level of *Interpersonal sexual skills*, refers to the ability to communicate your sexual thoughts, feelings, beliefs, desires, and behaviors to your partner, while you are engaged in sex, and/or while you are having a sexual discussion, without fear of criticism, judgement, or being ashamed.

The above questions that you have asked yourself, were designed to help you find out your level of openness and emotional safety, related to your sexuality.

# WHAT ARE THE CONDITIONS THAT CREATE HAVING INSUFFICIENT INTERPERSONAL SEXUAL SKILLS?

There are two main reasons.

The first reason is the lack of experience and awareness of ourselves and our partners as sexual beings. This begs the following questions:

- What have you learned about your sexuality, and who have been your teachers?
- What has your culture brought into your understanding of *yourself* as a male or female person?
- What did your parents/caregivers tell you, or model for you, in terms of how comfortable they were in talking about their own sexuality and/or their partners?
- Were you exposed to feelings of fear, guilt and/or shame with respect to your body, or genitals?
- Were you exposed to negative or prejudice views with regard to your sexual orientation?
- What were the specific words, body language, and facial expression that you saw your caregivers exhibiting, when sexual matters arose?



**I**f your caregivers showed discomfort, dislike, or felt ashamed when sexual matters came up, it affected you whether you realized it or not. You may or may not have been aware of its effect at the time, however, subconsciously you have stored that information. Now, as an adult, it surfaces, and directly impacts you as a sexual being, as well as affects your intimate relationship. Understanding how this happened, and how it is currently affecting you, is vital, in order to create the love, intimacy, and passion that we all desire.

If your caregivers showed discomfort, dislike, or felt ashamed when sexual matters came up, it affected you whether you realized it or not.

”





**T**he second reason that you may have insufficient interpersonal sexual skills, is unresolved hurt and anger issues, sexually, or non-sexually, from previous and current unresolved traumas in your life, which are now manifesting within your intimate relationship. Any positive and negative sexual experiences that you have undergone have impacted your sexual-self. If some of those experiences have frightened, or disgusted you, they are certain to be affecting your intimate relationship. Your emotional health is deeply affected by how you feel as a sexual being. Learning how to navigate the deep waters of sexual trauma, is essential to experiencing positive self-esteem and a healthy sex life. How do we learn this navigation?

*“Your emotional health is deeply affected by how you feel as a sexual being.”*



# WHY OUR MULTI-DIMENSIONAL RELATIONAL THERAPY (MDRT) MODEL IS DIFFERENT?

**B**ased on our many decades of research and clinical experience, we have designed a new model of psychotherapy, which we have named Multi-Dimensional Relational Therapy (MDRT). Our objective is to assist you in transforming the inner core of your being, to create high self-esteem, lasting love, connection, and intimacy, both with yourself, and between you and your partner.

Over the years, we found that the function of ‘ego’ and ‘spirit’, that kept appearing with our clients during the therapy hour, were missing and/or overlooked in much of the psychological literature. Eventually, with this discovery, by incorporating these two other concepts, we created our model of MDRT. The six dimensions that follow in this e-book form MDRT, which completes the picture of how we

function, and what gets in our way in our quest to create high self-esteem, as well as closeness and intimacy in our most important relationships.

**Our interpersonal sexual skills are  
impacted by both our ego and spirit.**



**O**ur interpersonal sexual skills are impacted by both our ego and spirit. Our ego, as we define it here, is a powerful part of us, that is responsible for our physical survival, and helps us to thrive in our bodies, and in our physical environment. Contrarily our spirit is connected to our hearts' yearning and desires. By exploring both concepts of ego and spirit, we move towards understanding ourselves, others, and how we interact in our intimate relationships.

**T**hrough MDRT, we will help you understand your ego, and how it plays an important part in the development of your authentic true-self and your sexual-self. We will delve into what is needed to develop a healthy ego, and what occurs when your ego becomes injured, which negatively affects your self-esteem, love life and intimacy.



**A**s clinicians, and according to our observation of clients' outcomes, we have witnessed when spirituality and spiritual values are a part of the individual or couples' consciousness, as well as when they are not. Our spirit, as opposed to our ego, is that part of us that is not concerned with our body's survival, or our personal achievements. Instead, it's only desires are to love, be loved, and connect authentically with all other spirits. Our spiritual values include kindness, empathy, appreciation, gratitude, truth, as well as the unconditional giving and receiving of love to and from all others. Understanding spiritually-based values, assists in helping couples to achieve what everyone seems to desire: a more fulfilling relationship, in which each person feels safe and loved in the way that means the most to them.

### **Transcending the physical**



When we have healed and established a healthy sexual-self, we can move forward in creating a transcendent sexual connection with our partner. Feeling positive about our sexual-self, and communicating that love and intimacy to our partner is the next step.

**O**ur interpersonal sexual skills, are the vehicle we use to co-create the kind of sexually intimate and transcendent experiences that we both want and need.

The way we relate to others, especially to our intimate partners, is mediated through either our ego or our spirit. Therefore, our interpersonal sexual skills, which informs our ability to communicate what is deeply inside of us is connected to the part of us that is online in the moment we are communicating.



*Our interpersonal sexual skills, are the vehicle we use to co-create the kind of sexually intimate and transcendent experiences that we both want and need.*

When we connect through ego, for the most part, we are connecting through intellect. When we connect through our spirit, for the most part, we are connecting through our heart. We will delve into this in much greater depth and detail in our MDRT dimensions.

# “Who am I, and who am I in this relationship?”

*Heart To Heart Counseling is proudly introducing a non-pathologizing way of raising self-esteem and eliminating ‘stuck-ness’ in your most important relationships...!*

## **Multi-Dimensional Relational Therapy (MDRT)**

Based on our many decades of research and clinical experience, we have designed a new model, which we have named Multi-Dimensional Relational Therapy (MDRT). Our objective is to assist you in transforming the inner core of your being, to create high self-esteem, lasting love, connection, and intimacy, both with yourself, and between you and your partner.

### **Dimension 1 – Ego Functioning and Defenses**

Before we grew up and developed an adult intimate relationship with another person, we were all individuals who were learning about ourselves and the world around us. This learning took place through the culture we were raised in, and through childhood life experiences. These experiences gave us both positive loving, and/or negative interactions and connections, which left us with feelings of being loved and cared for, or the lack thereof. How do those experiences shape and form our personality, and affect our ability to create intimacy later in life?

### **Dimension 2 – Spiritual Transcendence**

What most couples say they want when they come to counseling, is to achieve a ‘more fulfilling relationship’. What we have found is that this usually has to do with one or both partners not feeling loved in the way that is meaningful to them.

How does spirituality and the embodiment of spiritual values inform our ability to have high self-esteem, and to give and receive love in the way that is most meaningful to us and our partner?

### **Dimension 3 – Sexuality**

How happy are you with your sexual life? Has sex with your partner become routine and/or unfulfilling? Is sexual desire an unresolved issue between you and your partner?

Can you say exactly what you want in bed, or let your partner really see you during an orgasm (or do you have orgasms)? How inhibited do you feel in bed? Do you have sexual questions that remain unanswered? Have you stopped having sex altogether? Have you attempted and tried to use sex to get non-sexual needs met in your relationship? Do you fantasize or act out your desires to have sex outside your relationship?

### **Dimension 4 - Attachment and Childhood development**

When we care deeply about another person, we form an emotional attachment to that person. This is ubiquitous in human development throughout the world. One dictionary definition of *attachment* is that *attachment is a deep and enduring emotional bond between two people in which each seeks closeness and feels more secure, when in the presence of the attachment figure.* How we attach emotionally in our romantic relationships is a vital area to be both explored and understood if we desire true intimacy to develop.

There are three basic attachment styles:

**1** – Secure attachment

**2** – Anxious, Ambivalent attachment

**3** – Avoidant attachment

Understanding how these develop, and which style you utilized can help you to co-create the secure attachment style that everyone needs and wants.

### **Dimension 5 – Trauma and the loss of the authentic true-self**

Many individuals enter into a relationship with one another while having many unexamined traumas as part of their unique life histories, which have impaired the formation of their self-esteem, interpersonal skills, and ultimately the formation of their authentic true-selves. We call this impairment the ‘adapted-self’, or the ‘co-dependent-self’. Many marital conflicts are the end result of these unexamined and unresolved traumas they carry with them. This dimension’s primary focus will be on the impact of trauma on the individuals’ authentic true-self, and by extension his/her relational-self. Gaining a deeper understanding of this will allow us to transcend these traumatic experiences and help form positive loving relationships within ourselves and with our significant other.

### **Dimension 6 – Communication**

How we express ourselves to our partners often informs how our partners respond to us. Do we focus on the negative, i.e., say what we are not getting (you never hug me when you come home from work) or do we focus on the positive and ask for what we want more directly? (i.e., I really appreciate you coming home on time, and if you would give me a hug when you enter you would make my day!).



What makes communication so vitally important to long-lasting romance, and what are the secrets to having intimate communication with your partner? Do you listen to each other in order to understand, or do you listen to respond, and to be right?

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**Robert B. Jaffe, Ph.D., LMFT**, has been working as a licensed Marriage and Family Therapist and Ericksonian Certified Hypnotherapist, with over four decades of clinical experience in Encino, California. He holds a Bachelor of Arts degree in Philosophy from California State University, Northridge – Northridge, California, a Master of Science degree in Counseling Psychology from the University of LaVern, LaVern California, and a Doctoral degree in Philosophy and Hypnotherapy from the American Institute of Hypnotherapy, in Anaheim California. He concentrates his practice focusing on the treatment of addictions, trauma, Post Traumatic Stress Disorder, and couples counseling. He further specializes in the treatment of childhood trauma, sexual abuse, neglect, and emotional/physical abandonment. His many years working in the community and his extensive academic and in field training have established Dr. Jaffe as a seasoned and experienced psychotherapist. In addition to his clinical responsibilities, Robert is an unwavering and dependable friend, cherishing deep connections with his loved ones, embracing the joys of travel, and nourishing his body with a commitment to healthy eating.

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Dr. Rashidian earned her Ph.D. in Counseling at the University of New England (UNE), School of Health, in Armidale, Australia. She then completed a two-year post-Doctoral fellowship position at UNE with the focus on sexual healthcare and inclusion. She received a Master

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Committed to sexual healthcare and mental well-being research, Dr. Rashidian has focused on the enhancement of relationships and sexual enrichment over the past 25 years. Her passion is to help all people achieve and experience joy and fulfillment with their partners. “We all want everlasting happiness in our lives, and I believe that this is achievable.”

In addition to her clinical and research pursuits, she possesses a remarkable talent in the culinary arts, an enduring passion for painting, a fervent dedication to gardening, and a strong commitment to maintaining a healthy lifestyle through mindful eating and regular exercise habits.

Further information about her clinical work and focus can be obtained at Psychology Today, [trfsq.com](https://www.trfsq.com), and ResearchGate.

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