

# Chapter 2

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## PSYCHOLOGICAL INTIMACY

*“Finally, all of you should be of one mind, full of sympathy toward each other, loving one another with tender hearts and humble minds.” 1 Peter 3:8 (NLT)*

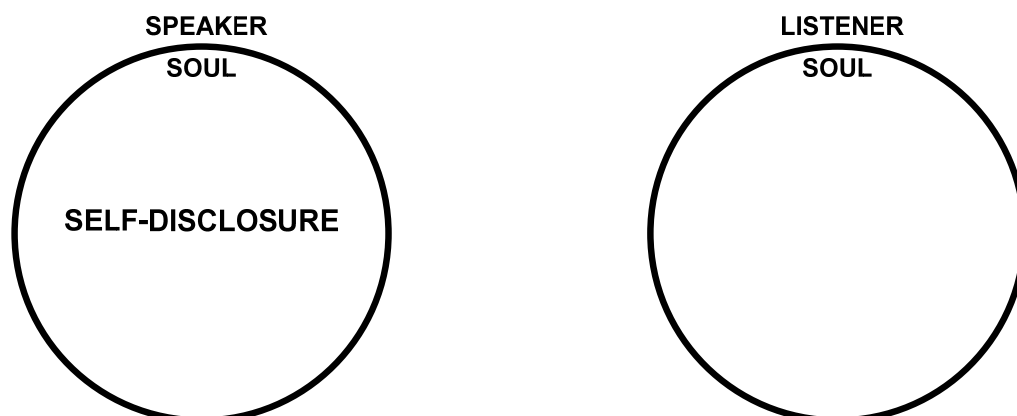
You have learned that there is more to “becoming one” than being intimate physically. In this chapter, you will learn how to share intimacy of your souls.

Your soul can be thought of as consisting of three parts: your mind, your emotions and your will. This is the psychological area of your life. Psychological intimacy involves sharing with your spouse your thoughts, feelings, and desires.

### **Self-disclosure**

When you tell your spouse what is going on in your mind, emotions, and will, you are sharing your soul. This is called self-disclosure.

Self-disclosure uses “I” statements and reveals what is going on in your soul.



The following set of diagrams illustrates how a speaker (in this case, the husband) uses self-disclosure. He communicates his thoughts, his feelings and his desires to his wife. By sharing all three parts, the listener (his wife) has the best chance of understanding him.

For example a husband might tell his wife, “I’ve been **thinking** about the debt we got ourselves into last Christmas. I **think** we bought too many gifts. I am **feeling** depressed because I am worried that we might do the same thing this year. I really **want** us to have fun over the holidays, but I don’t **want** us to overspend.”

### Mind – Sharing Thoughts

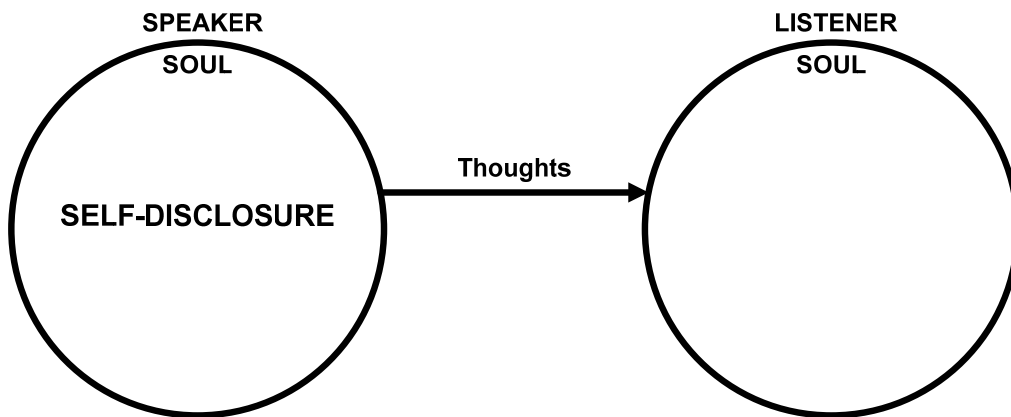
First he shares what he is **thinking** about a situation.

#### Dialogue #1

“I’ve been **thinking** about the debt we got ourselves into last Christmas. I **think** we bought too many gifts.”

To communicate your **thoughts**, use phrases like I think or I believe.

*“...Become complete. Be of good comfort, be of one **mind**, live in peace; and the God of love and peace will be with you.” 2 Corinthians 13:11 (NKJ)*



- Q1. Think about a situation **you** have experienced recently. What were you *thinking*?

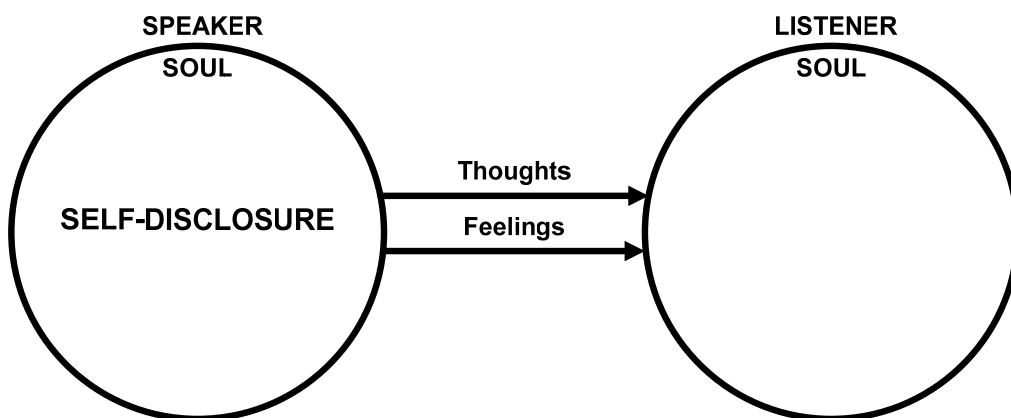
### Emotions – Sharing Feelings

Next, he communicates how he **feels** about the situation.

#### Dialogue #2

"I am **feeling** depressed because I am worried that we might do the same thing this year."

Feelings are neither right nor wrong; they simply indicate what is going on inside of you.



To communicate your **feelings** or emotions, use terms like the following:

#### Emotions List

accepted	glad	manipulated	smothered
afraid	grateful	miserable	sorry
angry	guilty	misunderstood	stupid
betrayed	happy	neglected	surprised
cheated	helpless	nervous	suspicious
concerned	hopeful	offended	tempted
confused	hurt	overwhelmed	threatened
controlled	ignored	pleased	tired
defensive	impatient	pressured	unappreciated
depressed	inadequate	proud	uneasy
disappointed	insecure	rejected	unorganized
encouraged	irritated	relaxed	unwanted
excited	jealous	relieved	upset
exhausted	lonely	sad	used
frustrated	loved	shocked	worried

- Q2.** How were you *feeling* during your recent situation? Can you find a word on the list that fits?

When you share your feelings, it helps your spouse understand how you are being affected emotionally by what is going on.

*“Then I realized how bitter I had become, how pained I had been by all I had seen.” Psalm 73:21 (NLT)*

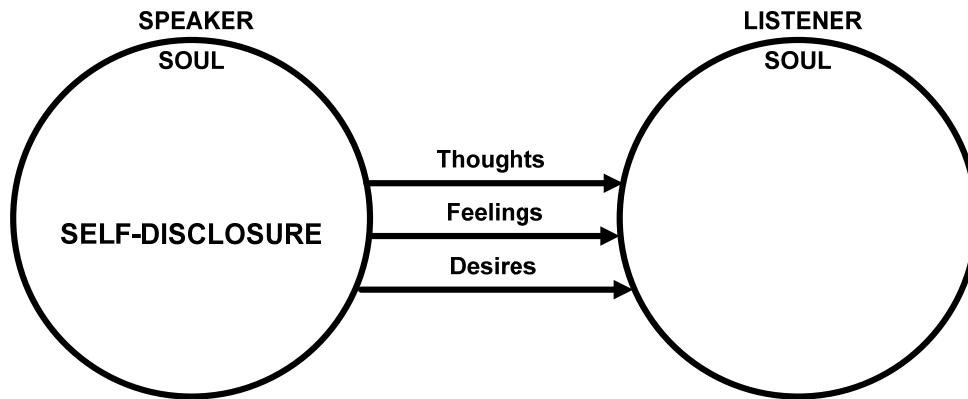
#### Will – Sharing Desires

Lastly in our example, the husband shares with his wife what he **desires**.

#### Dialogue #3

“I really **want** us to have fun over the holidays, but I don’t **want** us to overspend.”

To communicate your **desires**, use phrases such as I want, I like, or I hope.



**Q3.** What did you *want* in regard to your situation?

It's important for a couple to each know what the other wants. That way they can love each other by trying to give the other one what he or she wants. However, you need to be willing to share your wants without requiring that your spouse fulfill them. Likewise, when you don't share what you want, you are depriving your spouse of an opportunity to give.

### **Life or Death**

In the example used to illustrate how to communicate thoughts, feelings, and desires, notice that the husband takes ownership of his thinking. He also shares what he's feeling and what he wants. Notice that he used "I" statements too.

Compare that to a conversation that begins with "This year we are not buying everyone a Christmas present." The wife would probably get defensive and feel frustrated. When you take time to share what you are thinking, feeling, and wanting, you help your spouse understand.

**Q4.** What do the following verses teach about your words?

*“**Death and life** are in the power of the tongue, and those who love it will eat its fruit.” Proverbs 18:21 (NKJ)*

*“A gentle answer turns away wrath, but harsh words stir up anger. Gentle words bring life and health; a deceitful tongue crushes the spirit.” Proverbs 15:1, 4 (NLT)*

**Q5.** How do you think your words affect your spouse?

### **Work at It**

Sharing your soul with your spouse may seem like a lot of work, but the reward is well worth the effort. Working at your marriage and communication skills benefits you and your spouse.

*“The soul of a lazy man desires, and has nothing; but the soul of the diligent shall be made rich.”*

**Proverbs 13:4 (NKJ)**

A husband may find this area of intimacy difficult, but consider this example: Would a husband be happy with a wife who refused to share her body with him, just because it took effort to get undressed?

If a husband knew his wife wouldn't be intimate in the physical area, would he have married her? Yet many wives long to know their husband's soul, but are denied this area of intimacy.

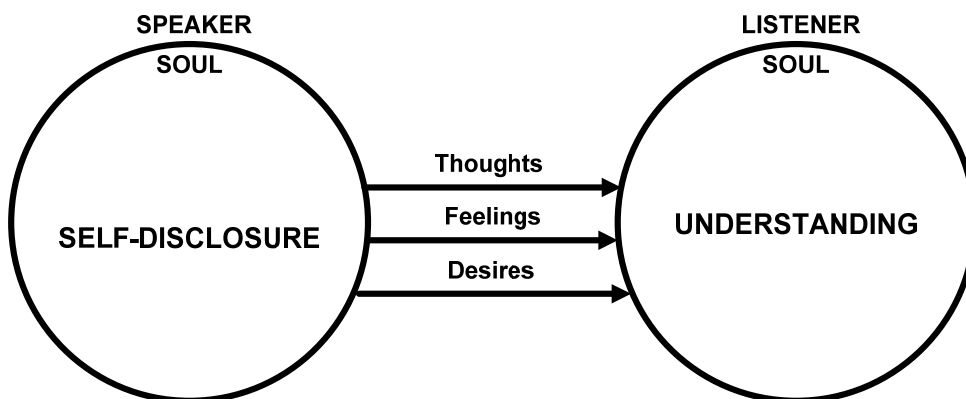
### **Understanding Is the Goal**

The purpose of psychological intimacy isn't to make the other person agree with you or even to change his or her mind. The purpose is to **understand each other**. You may not be in agreement, but you can have shared understanding.

Your spouse deserves to understand you, even if he or she doesn't choose to do what you want. Psychological intimacy is gaining shared understanding.

- Q6.** How comfortable are you with sharing your ideas or feelings with your spouse?
- Q7.** Have you been laughed at or ridiculed in the past and quit trying? Explain.
- Q8.** Do you try to make your spouse feel accepted when he or she shares things he or she is thinking, feeling, or wanting? Explain.

As the speaker shares, the listener is gaining *understanding*.



- Q9.** What should the listener be doing as the speaker talks?

## Role of the Listener

There are two characteristics that will help you as you listen.

### 1. Be Attentive.

- *Stop your thoughts.* Try to understand what the other person is saying. Don't try to think of how you will answer. Give your full attention. Allow the speaker to finish without interruptions. The Bible calls people who won't listen "foolish."

*"Fools have no interest in understanding; they only want to air their own opinions."* **Proverbs 18:2** (NLT)

*"He who answers a matter before he hears it, It is folly and shame to him."* **Proverbs 18:13** (NKJ)

**Q10.** Why is it foolish not to listen?

**Q11.** What kind of listener are you? Where is your focus?

*"Don't be selfish; don't live to make a good impression on others. Be humble, thinking of others as better than yourself. Don't think only about your own affairs, but be interested in others, too, and what they are doing."*  
**Philippians 2:3–4** (NLT)

- *Use body language.* Show you are listening by giving your spouse eye contact, nodding, and leaning forward.

*"...Look with your eyes and hear with your ears, and fix your mind on everything I show you."* **Ezekiel 40:4** (NKJ)



## 2. Be Responsive.

- *Ask questions.* Help your spouse communicate what is going on in his or her soul by asking soul-disclosing questions. For example:
  - What were you thinking?
  - How were you feeling?
  - What do you want?

*“A plan in the heart of a man is {like} deep water, but a man of understanding draws it out.”*

**Proverbs 20:5** (NASB)

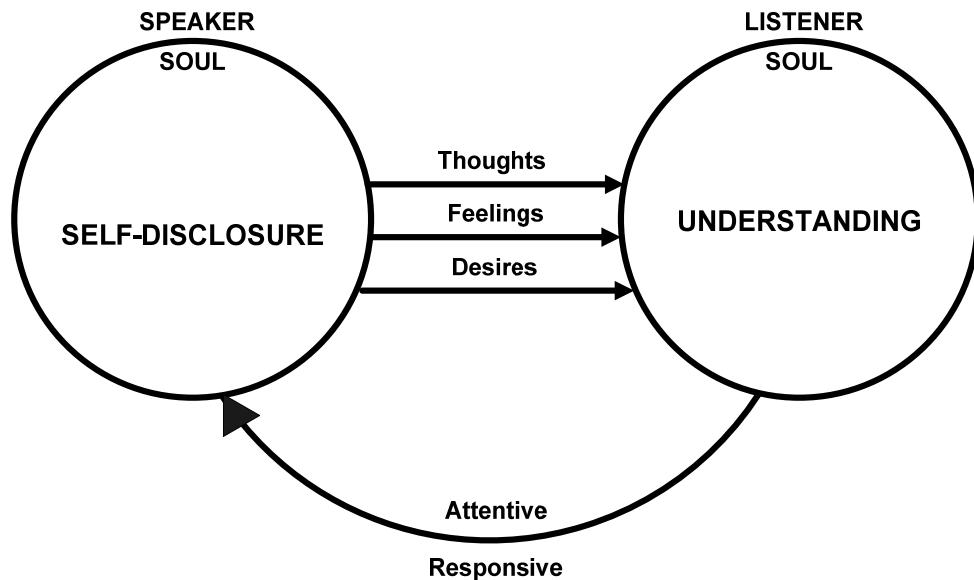
**Q12.** Do you ask these kinds of questions to understand your spouse? If not, what keeps you from asking them?

- *Repeat Back.* Listen so you can repeat back what you heard, this produces shared understanding. If you don't understand, maybe you need clarification. Begin with phrases like, “What I heard you say was...” or “Are you saying...?”

Feedback is important to psychological intimacy. First, you are making sure you heard what was said. If not, you get the message clarified. Secondly, you show your spouse that his or her message was important to you.

**Q13.** Will you begin following these guidelines to improve your listening?

In the following diagram, the wife in our example has listened to her husband share his soul. Now she responds by feeding back what she heard and shows her husband that she values him, as well as, what he has shared with her.



#### Dialogue #4

"I appreciate your sharing about these things with me. Let me make sure I understand. I heard you say that you have been **thinking** about how many gifts we bought last year and that you **feel** depressed, **thinking** that we might get into debt again this year. You **want** us to have fun over the holidays, but you don't **want** us to overspend."

Notice the example is not word for word, which might be annoying. The wife is *attentive* by stopping what she was doing to give her husband eye contact. She is *responsive* by summing up the main points of what her husband shared and thanks him for sharing.

If she misses something important, her husband can clarify what he said. She can respond to what he has said and they can talk about it.

### **Personal Application**

**Rely on the Lord** as you  *speak*  and  *listen*  to your spouse. You will be communicating, “I care about you. That’s why I share myself with you  *and*  that’s why I want you to share yourself with me.”

**Write a prayer.** Tell God your thoughts, feelings, and desires in regard to what you have learned in this lesson.

**Plan to communicate** with your spouse about something that has been on your mind.

**Q14. Write out** below what you are thinking, feeling, and wanting.

**Q15.** When will you **talk to your spouse** concerning this matter?

## Psychological Intimacy

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*Diagram*

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*Notes*