

## 10.1 The First State of Mind: Intimacy

The most essential prerequisite for the state of intimacy is the feeling of being in love. As I discussed in my section on the Love Bank, you obtain that feeling when your spouse has deposited enough love units into his or her account in your Love Bank to trigger that reaction.

In this most enjoyable state of a relationship, spouses follow the rule of the Giver, Do whatever you can to make **your spouse** happy, and avoid anything that makes the **your spouse** unhappy, even if it makes **you unhappy**. When both partners follow this rule, both are getting their emotional needs met, and all is well with the world.

In this state of mind the Giver is in charge and giving to each other seems almost instinctive. Both spouses have a great desire to make each other happy in any way they can, and want to avoid hurting each other at all costs.

As they protect each other, trust builds. They can share their deepest feelings, becoming emotionally vulnerable, because they know that they both have each other's best interests at heart. They feel so close to each other that to hurt the other person would be the same as hurting themselves.

Conversation in the state of intimacy is respectful and non-judgmental. The partners also express their deepest love for each other and gratitude for the care they are receiving. By lowering their defenses and forming a close emotional bond, they feel even greater pleasure when they meet each other's needs. This is the way marriage was meant to be.

Negotiation in this state of marriage is controlled by the Giver and the Giver's rule. When one spouse expresses a desire, the other rushes to fulfill it. There is no thought of repayment, because the Giver's care is unconditional. As long as both spouses are in the same state, there's actually nothing to negotiate--they give each other anything that's possible, and they do it unconditionally.

But giving unconditionally isn't really negotiating. It's giving whatever is requested without the need to bargain. And more importantly, it's with the attitude that bargaining would be somehow immoral, because it would imply conditionality.

You can get into some very bad habits when you are in the state of intimacy. A new mother in love with her husband may let her husband completely off the hook when it comes to child care. A husband in love with his wife may do nothing to restrain her tendency toward irresponsible spending, driving them both into bankruptcy. And once these bad habits have been around for a while, they are very difficult to change.

You'd think that the state of intimacy would guide a husband and wife toward marital bliss. But, instead, because of the failure to negotiate terms that benefit both spouses, it tends to drive them toward the second state of mind in marriage, conflict.