

## 3.2 Sexual Fulfillment

When you married, you and your spouse promised to be faithful to each other for life. You agreed to be each other's only sexual partner. You made this commitment because you trusted each other to meet your sexual needs, to be sexually available and responsive to each other. The emotional need for sex, then, is a very exclusive emotional need. If you have this need, you will be very dependent on your spouse to meet it. You have no other ethical choices.

But in most marriages, one spouse, usually the husband, has a much greater need for sex than the other. This tends to create a significant conflict if his need is not being met as often as he would like or the way he would like it to be met. That's why it is very important for you and your spouse to understand which one of you has the greatest need for sex, and how you can meet that need frequently and effectively for each other. Without that understanding and skill, you are likely to join the majority of marriages where the need for sex is not being adequately met.

Most people know whether or not they have a need for sex, but in case there is any uncertainty, I will point out some of the most obvious symptoms.

A sexual need usually pre-dates your relationship with each other, and is somewhat independent of your relationship. While you may have discovered a deep desire to make love to your spouse since you've been in love, it isn't quite the same thing as a sexual need. Wanting to make love when you are in love is sometimes merely a reflection of wanting to be emotionally and physically close.

However, one dead give-away for having a sexual need is sexual fantasies. If you have imagined what it would be like having your sexual need met in the most fulfilling ways, you probably have a sexual need. The more the fantasy is employed, the greater your need. And the way your sexual need is met in your fantasy is usually a good indicator of your sexual predispositions and orientation.

The need for sex and the need for affection are often confused with one another. To help you sort them out, think of it this way: affection is an act of love (hugging, kissing, hand-holding, etc.) that is non-sexual and can be shared with friends, relatives, children and even pets with absolutely no sexual intent. However, if your affection tends to have a sexual motive, it is a symptom of your need for sex, not your need for affection.

If you tend to feel happy and contented when you make love, and you feel frustrated when you don't make love often enough or the way you want to make love, you have a need for sexual fulfillment.