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The Nature of Intimacy:
A qualitative study of five couples

A thesis presented in partial fulfillment
of the requirements for the degree of

Master of Arts
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Massey University

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Abstract

This study takes a qualitative approach to facilitate five couples describing their experiences of intimacy. Transcribed interviews were analysed for recurring themes and processes. The Waring Intimacy scale was also administered to participants. Although intimacy is an important goal in contemporary society much is still to be understood about how it is achieved and maintained.

Reis and Shaver (1988) have developed a process model of intimacy that describes a single interaction between two individuals and incorporates the properties of a relationship, thus recognising that intimacy is more than the sum of repeated interactions.

The general validity of the model was confirmed by the experiences of the couples in this study. Differences were found between those with intimate relationships, who often behaved according to the model and those who reported their relationship as lacking in intimacy, who frequently omitted one or more steps of the model.

The model was revised in the light of the data to incorporate such metacognitive factors as the effects of an individuals' expectations and beliefs on his or her motives, fears, needs and goals. Self disclosure was differentiated into direct or indirect, verbal or non-verbal; all of which may play a role in intimacy.

The results show that intimacy is both a complex process and a subjective relational experience necessitating a relatively well defined sense of identity and high level communication skills. Analysis of themes and experiences from the interview data reflected the complexity of this construct more adequately than data from the Waring Intimacy Questionnaire.

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Chapter One

INTRODUCTION

"Intimacy ... is a matter of tuning into someone else's reality and risking being changed by that."

(Dowrick, 1991, p.183)

Intimacy is a widely sought after goal in contemporary Western society. However, Wynne and Wynne (1986) suggest that rather than pursuing intimacy, it can best be achieved by attending to the basic relational processes such as caregiving and joint problem solving. They offer a definition of intimacy somewhat different to Dowrick's intriguing one quoted above: a subjective relational experience characterised by trusting self-disclosure and empathic responding. Intimacy is not seen as a process but rather as the resulting subjective experience of basic relational processes.

Reis (1990) asks "Is intimacy the sine qua non of satisfying interpersonal bonds and personal growth, as some would claim, or is our concern with intimacy a byproduct of the spiritually deprived 1980's?" (p. 16) After a review of selected theories and related empirical evidence, Reis concludes in agreement with Wynne and Wynne that intimacy is a popular and very important human goal.

Sternberg (1987) suggests that, above all, it is love that people seek. He describes three components in the triangle of love; intimacy, passion and commitment. The intimacy component in this model involves those feelings that promote closeness and connectedness.

A considerable amount has been written in the psychological literature on the subject of intimacy: attempts at identifying the components of the subjective experience of intimacy, describing intimacy as a process, developing operational definitions and establishing the roles intimacy plays.

This chapter will:

1/ Explore suggestions of the roles intimacy may play in human interaction in order to establish why the study of this concept is so important.

2/ Examine theoretical positions and related empirical contributions to the study of intimacy in the psychological literature. These will be augmented by some of the insights offered by self-help literature in order to develop a comprehensive picture of current understandings of the nature of intimacy.

1/ The Role of Intimacy in Human Development and Wellbeing

Waring, Patton, Neron and Linker (1986) operationally define four types of marital quality based on a total intimacy score, subscale profile and social desirability score from the Waring Intimacy Questionnaire. (Waring, 1984) These authors found that for couples with a low level of marital intimacy, a significantly higher proportion of spouses showed symptoms of non-psychotic emotional illness than couples with an average or higher level of intimacy. This finding suggests the possibility that relationships with a high level of intimacy may have a positive effect on the psychological well-being of spouses, and those with a low level of intimacy may have the opposite effect.

For example, patients with psychosomatic illness have been found to have relationships in which they do not share personal thoughts and feelings, are seldom mutually affectionate and have minimal sexual activity. (Waring, 1986). Waring and Patton (1984) found a significant association between severity of depression and deficiencies of marital intimacy in both men and women. Although no causal relationship or direction can be determined from these studies, they do offer some indication of the role intimacy may play in preventing non-psychotic emotional illness.

Much has been written about the contribution of intimacy to sexual relations. Talmadge and Talmadge (1986) see low sexual desire as the result of the interaction of intrapsychic issues with interpersonal issues. In particular they conceptualise low sexual desire as a way of acting out the lack of intimacy in a relationship.

In his theory of sexual offending Marshall (1989) suggests that the emotional loneliness that results from failure to achieve intimacy in adult relationships can lead to an aggressive disposition and the tendency to seek sex with less threatening partners in the hope of finding intimacy.

In his book *Male Sexual Awareness*, McCarthy (1988) contends that sex is one sure means of creating and reinforcing feelings of intimacy between a couple and conversely that intimacy is a major contributor to couples wanting to have sex together.

Zilbergeld (1978) also discusses male sexuality but imposes somewhat more restrictive guidelines. He suggests that men have been conditioned into translating their need for closeness and comfort into a need for sex, citing as evidence for this the fact that most massage parlours are also places of prostitution. He contends that this conditioning is a major contributing factor to many erectile problems in men. Zilbergeld offers as a solution to these problems the importance of both partners getting their intimacy needs met before attempting sex. He considers that the discussion of feelings and wishes and the treatment of non-sexual touching as an important activity in its own right, are two important aspects of the intimacy process.

A significant factor in a woman's ability to experience orgasm has been found to be her capacity to relate intimately to her partner (Leiblum and Rosen, 1989). These authors found that in sexually troubled relationships there are often problems with the regulation of distance and closeness.

As a result of interviews with 50 easily orgasmic women Ogden (1988) proposed an holistic concept of sexual ecstasy that incorporates involvement of the body, mind, heart and soul. She suggests that women require more than orgasm for sexual satisfaction; they also need emotional, intellectual and spiritual satisfaction some of which comes from caring and sensitive non-sexual interactions with partners.

2/ Towards a Definition of Intimacy

Intimacy as a single interpersonal process

In their extensive review of research on interpersonal processes in close relationships, Clark and Reis (1988) criticise on several grounds the limitations of research in the area of intimacy prior to the 1980's, particularly:

- 1/ The lack of construct validity. Intimacy studies focused narrowly on either willingness to self disclose or physical proximity and other non-verbal contact during first encounters. (eg. Altman and Taylor, 1973)
- 2/ The lack of ecological validity. Many studies reviewed were laboratory studies. (eg. Archer and Berg, 1978)

Included in this review are reports of more recent studies that use much broader operational definitions of intimacy. These will be described in detail later in this chapter. (eg. Waring, Tillmann, Frelick & Weisz, 1980; Reis and Shaver, 1988). The authors also acknowledge that an intimate relationship is more than the sum of repeated interactions. However Clark and Reis have limited their own definition of intimacy by nominating three processes which they suggest comprise close interpersonal relationships; these are interdependence, emotion and intimacy. They offer no rationale for their selection of these three processes and examine them separately thus disregarding both the possibility of interactions between these processes and of an holistic view.

The authors state that how one sees intimacy depends on the perspective used to examine it. They review research of the intimacy process (eg. Berscheid, 1985), the components of intimacy (eg. Pennebaker and Beall, 1986) and individual differences in preferences and capacities for intimacy (eg. McAdams, 1984 in Clark and Reis, 1988). From each of these perspectives the emphasis is largely on self-disclosure rather than on a broader definition of intimacy as a multicomponent process, although Clark and Reis had previously mentioned the recognition of the importance of other processes such as affection, validation and support. These authors attribute this emphasis to the legacy of early research and overlook the effect of their own apparently arbitrary separation of intimacy from interdependence and emotion. A study of some of the research reviewed by these authors and of research subsequent to their article reveals the inadequacies of the account produced by Clark and Reis.

Intimacy as the sum of eight major components

Waring, Tillman, Frelick, Russell and Weisz (1980) moved away from the limitations of earlier definitions by seeking spontaneous understandings of the concept of intimacy. They conducted open ended interviews with a random sample of 50 adults in the general population and standardised interviews with a further sample of 24 couples randomly selected from the general population matched to 24 clinical couples. From this, a subsequent study (Waring, McElrath, Lefcoe and Weisz, 1981) and an extensive review of the literature, Waring and colleagues developed an operational definition of intimacy that includes eight facets. These are:

- 1/ Conflict resolution: resolving differences of opinion.
- 2/ Affection: expressing feelings of emotional closeness.
- 3/ Cohesion: feeling committed to the relationship.
- 4/ Sexuality: communicating and fulfilling sexual needs.
- 5/ Identity: level of self confidence and self esteem.
- 6/ Compatibility: ability to work and play together.
- 7/ Expressiveness: disclosing thoughts, beliefs, attitudes and feelings.
- 8/ Autonomy: being independent from families of origin and from offspring.

Waring (1981) proposed that a measure of the quantity and quality of marital intimacy can be obtained from the responses to forty items based on the above eight constructs. Thus he developed the Waring Intimacy Questionnaire (1984). A detailed discussion of the development of this questionnaire can be seen in Appendix B.

Waring adopted Berman and Lief's (1975) theory that dyadic relationships can be defined by three dimensions; power, boundary and intimacy. From previous research (Waring, McElrath, Mitchell & Derry, 1981) intimacy was found to be the dimension that most determines marital adjustment. However since the development of intimacy was seen as a process, Waring did not attempt to isolate boundary and power from the definition of intimacy. The Waring Intimacy Questionnaire can therefore be seen as a measure of the quality and quantity of overall marital functioning taken from the perspective of closeness rather than of power or of boundaries.

Intimacy as a dimension of a dyadic system

Roughan and Jenkins (1990) recognize, like Waring, that the three interpersonal dimensions of power, boundary and intimacy identified by Berman and Lief (1975) are not mutually exclusive. Accordingly they do not attempt to explore any one dimension in isolation. Their model is based on White's (1984) cybernetic premise that couples mature through a series of predictable developmental phases and that problems can be viewed in terms of " the reciprocal fit between partners and the social context in which they develop." p130, (Roughan and Jenkins, 1990) This model offers a framework for understanding data, that shows how parts of a structure (in this case a couple's relationship) are interrelated and how structures themselves interact with other structures; each structure is a system itself, may contain other systems and is a member of other systems.

Roughan and Jenkins propose that the nature of imbalances in each of the three dimensions of a relationship affects a couple's functioning in all dimensions. In order to facilitate identification of imbalances Roughan and Jenkins' model includes a description of the stages of a relationship, the components of an individual's style of loving and sexual style, and three main categories of relationship imbalance as summarised below:

1/ Relationship Stages

The authors outline three main phases of the continuing process of relationship development that are worked through, not neatly and sequentially but in different areas of the relationship at different times and in different orders:

- a) Honeymoon - the stage of novelty, romance and ideals where the emphasis is on agreement and differences are overlooked either by accommodation and compromise or by adherence to relationship roles (often traditional).
- b) Dispute - individual differences emerge, partners struggle to balance individual and relationship needs. Tasks are to achieve independence and autonomy and to cope with disillusionment and dissatisfaction. If both partners have established themselves as independent individuals before entering the relationship they are seen as being much more likely to cope at this stage of the relationship.

c) Balance - Both partners are able to take responsibility for their own needs and wants, accept their partners' differences, limitations and strengths and share responsibilities in the relationship. The aim is to achieve a balance between sharing and independence.

2/ Style of Loving and Sexual Style

Roughan and Jenkins refer to the beliefs, values and expectations each individual has about what constitutes a fulfilling and loving relationship as a person's "style of loving". This style has an effect on the choice of partner, the ways in which each partner contributes to the relationship, and which aspects of the relationship each takes responsibility for. Discrepancies between styles can be a cause of problems. The authors refer to "sexual style" as a subset of the style of loving which relates specifically to sexual behaviour.

3/ Categories of Relationship Imbalance

Roughan and Jenkins have outlined three overlapping patterns of relationship difficulties that can arise due to the combining of two individuals with particular styles of loving:

- a) Power: Relationships with a predominant imbalance in the areas of status and hierarchy. Couples have either a predominantly dominant/submissive relationship or a symmetrical, predominantly competitive relationship.
- b) Boundary: Relationships can have boundary and territorial imbalances in the way each partner balances his/her loyalties to self, partner and wider systems outside the partnership. Three common patterns of imbalance are:
 - i) Ownership-obligation: where the dominant partner believes it is their right/duty to define the partners' boundaries and restrict behaviour.
 - ii) Hypervigilance and reassurance: one constantly monitors the other's behaviour, the other constantly seeks to reassure.
 - iii) Loyalty to partner vs. loyalty to the wider system: one partner wants more commitment to the relationship and less to eg. work or the family of origin, the other wants the reverse.

c) Intimacy: Imbalances in this dimension concern closeness and distance, attachment and affiliation. Three common patterns of imbalances are:

- i) Belongingness-separateness: where one partner takes most of the responsibility for emotional and physical sharing and closeness and the other takes most of the responsibility for helping partners to establish clear individual boundaries and a sense of independence.
- ii) Sexual intimacy-non sexual: one partner sees sex as the most appropriate way to express love and affection and expects sex to lead to loving feelings and a fulfilling relationship. The other partner contributes to intimacy in non sexual ways; touch, talking etc. and sees these as appropriate ways to express love and affection believing sex may follow.
- iii) Verbal-non verbal: different communication styles; one partner relies on verbal communication to express needs and solve problems, the other non verbal behaviour.

The Roughton and Jenkins' model described above incorporates:

- * Individual cognitive aspects showing that behaviour is affected by the meanings attributed to events as well as the events themselves.
- * The changing forces affecting behaviour in an ongoing dyadic system.
- * The imbalances created by the interactions of two individuals with each other and with other systems.

Consistent with most family therapy models which focus on observable relationships, the model does not focus on individual personalities. Alternative theories and models of intimacy which do place an emphasis on individual psychology are discussed below.

Intimacy as a Prototype of Major Relational Principles

Influential relational theories rate frequent mention in some discussions of intimacy (Reis, 1990; Paul and White, 1990; Birchnell, 1986.) although the authors offer various interpretations of their contribution to the study of intimacy. These include:

1/ Erikson's (1950, 1968) theory of personality stages which proposes that the capacity for intimacy emerges from the sixth stage of development during young adulthood. Of particular importance for a healthy adult is the resolution of the fifth stage identity crisis. A secure sense of personal identity is seen as a necessary prerequisite for intimacy, which itself is a prerequisite for the development of a productive adult of good character.

Erikson described intimacy as the fusion of identities of two people who know and care deeply about each other; this task cannot be achieved healthily without a clear sense of identity. Though acknowledging that same-sex friends are better suited than opposite-sex friends to provide understanding and validation due to their common experiences, Erikson maintains that the most satisfying form of relationship involves a combination of sexuality with trust and commitment. Thus he argues that intimacy occurs best in committed adult heterosexual relationships, apparently overlooking the possibility of these conditions being met by a committed adult homosexual relationship.

Reis and Shaver (1988) found that empirical research supports Erikson's claim that identity preceeds intimacy (eg. Tesch and Whitbourne, 1982) though as the focus of the studies reviewed is on intimacy as a state to be attained, little understanding is gained of the process by which this state is achieved.

In contrast, Paul and White (1990), whose model is described later in this chapter, argue that intimate relationships develop in a spiral pattern; the relationship offers a context for the development of identity which in turn prepares individuals for progress to higher levels of intimacy.

2/ Bowlby's attachment theory. This has provided a basis for studies of intimacy. In this theory a sense of security gained from having a reliable and responsive caregiver is seen as a prerequisite for normal interaction with others. Bowlby (1969) contends that individuals develop cognitive schemata of their expectations and beliefs from their early attachment experiences. Though there are no

longitudinal studies providing direct evidence of the continuation of attachment style from infancy through to adult relationships, Reis and Shaver (1988) review studies suggesting that concepts of Bowlby's attachment theory do apply to adult intimate relationships (eg Hazan and Shaver, 1987). Reis (1990) suggests that attachment is largely established, maintained and expressed non-verbally and involves many of the same channels used by adults to regulate intimacy: proximity, gaze, facial expressions, touch and so forth.

3/ Harry Stack Sullivan's interpersonal theory, which also has relevance to the study of intimacy. Sullivan (1953) observed that the need for intimacy arises between childhood and adolescence in same sex friendships in which partners reveal themselves and gain validation of their ideas and attributes. With puberty and its accompanying lustful needs comes the urge to enter relationships involving sex. However Sullivan suggests that the different socialisation experiences of males and females fail to prepare adolescents for establishing mutually validating relationships with a member of the opposite sex.

Buhrmester and Furman (1987) support Sullivan's claim that intimacy becomes important during preadolescence with their finding that childrens' descriptions of friendship begin to emphasize the sharing of intimate thoughts and feelings before they reach adolescence. Gottman (1979) demonstrates the importance of validation as a response to self-disclosure with his finding that non-distressed married couples demonstrate mutual validation much more than distressed married couples in their problem-focused communication.

4/ Carl Rogers (1980) argued that empathic, nonjudgemental, supportive listening fosters self acceptance which in turn facilitates openness and trust in a marital relationship. Like Sullivan, Rogers sees validation as the major component of intimacy.

Intimacy From a Developmental Perspective

Paul and White (1990) propose relationship maturity as a conceptual framework for understanding the formation of intimate relationships as part of a major developmental process. The authors provide a description of the progression of such skills and characteristics essential to intimacy as perspective taking, communication, commitment, empathy and sexuality, through three levels of maturity. They have named these levels: the self focused, role focused and individuated connected levels of maturity.

This model offers a useful picture of intimacy as comprising cognitive, behavioural and affective components each of which changes according to the level of maturity. Though Paul and White suggest that it is relationship maturity that defines the level of intimacy it could be argued that any relationship is made up of two individuals who can only relate together at the level of the less mature partner. Thus one can see this as another model focusing on the individual personality.

As mentioned earlier these authors acknowledge the importance to intimacy of both the attachment and individuation processes but differ from Erikson (1950) in seeing the two processes as interwoven. They argue that experimentation with close interpersonal relationships during adolescence facilitates identity development which then prepares the adult for the formation of intimate relationships in Erikson's sense.

Intimacy as an Interaction Between Two Individuals

Reis and Shaver (1988) suggest that although intimacy is ultimately an individual experience and perception it occurs in a socially interactive situation and consequently the focus needs to be placed on the interaction.

The intimacy process begins when one person expresses, through verbal or non-verbal means, personally revealing feelings or information to another person. It continues when the listener responds supportively or empathically. For an interaction to become intimate, the discloser must feel understood, validated and cared for by the listener. Both participants' behaviour depends on the other's behaviour and response, as well as on their own pre-existing or situationally determined motives, needs and goals. (p. 16)

Reis and Shaver offer the most precise and detailed explanation of the intimacy process of all the models reviewed, incorporating individual, contextual and interactional factors as will be described following the diagram of this model presented in Figure 1. Although the model illustrates a single episode with A as discloser and B as responder the authors recognise that intimacy occurs between two people who influence each other's feelings and behaviours on an ongoing basis.

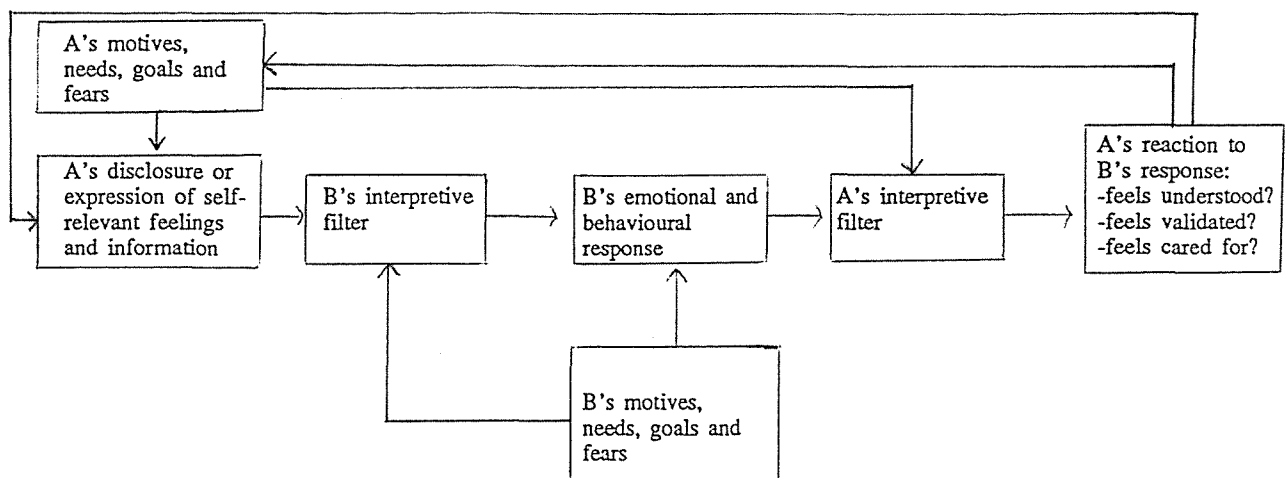


Figure 1 A model of the intimacy process (Reis and Shaver, 1988)

1/ Individual factors

Reis and Shaver do not assume that an individual has constant tendencies towards intimacy independent of fluctuating motives, fears and goals. They suggest that desires and fears influenced by past interpersonal experiences may create or act in conflict with an individual's motives in any intimate interaction.

Incorporated in this model is the concept of metacognition; a process of appraising one's partners' attempts at intimacy and the information revealed. Reis and Shaver incorporated the concept of an interpretive filter based on social psychology research which shows that interpretations of a partner's behaviour are greatly influenced by expectations and schemata which themselves are based on past experiences (Markus and Zajonc, 1985). An individual may not perceive a partner's expression as it was intended; what influences the response is the interpretation, accurate or not.

In their reference to individual fears Reis and Shaver note but do not enlarge upon the issue of distance regulation. Israelstam (1989) suggests that any definition of intimacy must include both the separateness and the closeness aspects of intimacy:

Intimacy between two individuals can be said to exist when each is able to sustain sufficient closeness to satisfy mutual proximity seeking and caregiving needs and sufficient separateness to satisfy each other's needs for personal growth and development. (p. 7)

Weiss (1987) agrees with this view and stresses that intimacy does not equal indiscriminate self-disclosure; in order to create interactional thoughts and feelings an individual must have privacy and a sense of boundaries. Weiss suggests that unwanted invasion of boundaries destroys intimacy because the individual does not have privacy.

2/ Interactional factors

Disclosure of feelings and desires has been found to have a potentially greater impact on the development of intimacy than disclosure of facts (Fitzpatrick, 1987). Reis and Shaver propose that in providing an opportunity to understand the speaker as a unique and vulnerable human being, emotional self-disclosure also offers the possibility for the listener to demonstrate caring, understanding and validation by responding appropriately. Rogers (1972) suggests an attitude of unconditional positive regard will fulfill the criterion of appropriate responding.

When this process is mutual partners can develop the shared, reciprocal and deep understandings that Reis and Shaver describe as characterising intimacy.

Perlmutter and Hatfield (1980) take the issue of emotional self-disclosure one step further than Reis and Shaver. Writing from a systemic perspective they suggest that for an intimate relationship to remain intimate, couples must intentionally metacommunicate over serious issues; that is, deliberately talk about the relational context of their message as well as communicating at a literal level. Using the principles of Watzlawick, Weakland and Fisch (1974), Perlmutter and Hatfield describe how intentional metacomments can bring about second order change. In contrast to first order change transactions where partners in an interaction use strategies to maintain the status quo, second order change transactions involve a spontaneous move into the unknown, thus risking change. Here Perlmutter and Hatfield appear to be in accord with Dowrick's (1991) proposal quoted at the beginning of this chapter, that intimacy occurs when one individual tunes into another's reality and risks being changed by that process.

A further interactional factor is identified by Hatfield and Rapson (1987). Few people select partners who desire the same level of intimacy as they do. This can lead to an ongoing deterioration in intimacy when one partner seeks more closeness and the other more distance.

3/ Contextual factors

Reis and Shaver recognize that intimacy is more than the sum of repeated interactions; special properties such as trust and stable expectations derive from, but extend beyond, the content of the individual episodes. Memories of past encounters and anticipations of future ones influence goals, motives and fears which in turn affect the ability of both partners to be open and honest. Commitment, arising from the emotions engendered in intimate interactions, from love, from fear of being alone and from feelings of obligation, can carry partners through the fluctuations in their feelings for each other and perhaps influence responses in individual interactions. Similarly experiencing validation, understanding and caring can help a partner to reciprocate at a future time.

Gender Issues

In a study of sex and marital intimacy Patton and Waring (1985) found gender differences in understandings of intimacy. Husbands were more likely to see their sexual relationship as a component separate from intimacy, whereas for wives sexual fulfillment was more closely associated with their perception of marital intimacy.

Hatfield and Rapson (1987) quote the results from a survey of peoples' expectations of typical men and women. These showed that women are seen to have the characteristics necessary for intimacy (warm, expressive, aware of the feelings of others) and that men are not. They also quote research from the 1970's and 80's indicating that women are more comfortable with intimate talk than men and know more about intimate relations than men. (eg. Dion and Dion, 1979. Millet, 1975, in Hatfield and Rapson, 1987). With the current move away from traditional stereotypical gender conditioning towards the androgynous man and woman able to develop all aspects of his or her character, research in the 1990's may show different results. It seems likely that these will reflect individual differences in the capacity for intimacy, rather than gender differences.

Wynne and Wynne (1986) suggest that rather than reflecting biological differences, gender differences in intimacy are indications of differing life experiences, different goals and different priorities. For example, women's experiences of intense involvement in an attachment/caregiving relationship with their children may have allowed them to develop greater skills and expectations in intimate relating than men. Women's inability to satisfy their needs and wants by the use of force may have led to them developing their communication skills to a higher degree than men, particularly in the area of responsiveness to subtle connotations of verbal and non-verbal language. Traditionally women have been concerned with seeking community and intimacy while men in Western culture seek autonomy and individuation.

Methodological Issues

Much of the interpersonal relations literature of the last few decades reveals increasingly sophisticated attempts to classify and measure various dimensions of marital relationships such as happiness, success, stability, adjustment, intimacy, satisfaction, cohesion, inclusion, control and affection. The study of human interaction gives rise to a variety of methodological questions. The present review of intimacy studies reveals many methodological issues yet to be resolved:

1/ Any instrument or research method may in part be measuring social desirability and conventionality as much as the construct of interest. The Waring Intimacy Questionnaire (Waring, 1984) includes a social desirability scale in part answer to this criticism. Waring (1985) found that husbands have a different perception of their marital intimacy than their wives and suggests that the question of whose perception is more accurate awaits objective assessment. This may not be a useful question to ask in the study of intimacy; if one defines intimacy as a subjective experience, perhaps it is entirely in the eye of the beholder and objectivity is not at issue.

2/ The analysis of outcome is inevitably affected by the initial selection of data, as illustrated in the Clark and Reis (1988) review.

3/ Any assessment of intimacy has to take into account both recipients' needs and satisfaction with the ingredients provided by the other; intimacy is a bidirectional concept. (Wilhelm and Parker, 1988)

4/ In proposing to study intimacy, researchers need to be clear on several issues:

- *Is the study of individual or relational intimacy?

- *Is it possible to differentiate between individual characteristics and relationship characteristics?

- *If studying individual intimacy, is the focus on capacity for intimacy, perception of intimacy or an observer's assessment of intimacy achieved?

- *If studying relational intimacy, is the focus on each individual's perception of the level of intimacy in their relationship or on each individual's level of satisfaction with intimacy; a question of quantity or quality? Furthermore the researcher needs to decide whether the focus will be on discrepancies between individual accounts, an observer's account or a joint account of intimacy by the couple.

5/ If intimacy is seen as a process occurring over time and individuals have differing needs for intimacy which may never be fully met on a continual basis then an individual's expectations and beliefs will influence their experience of intimacy. Those who focus on their unmet needs, perhaps because of dissatisfactions in other areas of their life or depression (Waring and Patton, 1984), may describe their relationship differently than those who have a more positive focus on what they are getting.

6/ Opinions seem to differ over whether it is better to use a narrow operational definition or a broader definition of intimacy. Particular issues of concern are the avoidance of confounding variables on the one hand and recognition of the nature of intimacy as a multifaceted concept on the other.

7/ Henderson, Byrne & Duncan-Jones (1981) have developed a measure of both the availability and the adequacy of attachment. Findings indicate that measures of availability of attachment are stable over time, like a personality trait, whereas measures of the adequacy of attachment show greater fluctuation. Waring (1985) suggests that if a study analyses perception of the quality of intimacy it may be tapping a stable quality of relationships which may reflect a personality trait or attitude rather than the actual quality of the relationship.

Conclusion

The literature reviewed suggests quite clearly that intimacy is a widely sought after goal that plays an important role in adult happiness and wellbeing. The meaning of the term intimacy is a lot less clear. Intimacy is seen by some authors as a process occurring in a socially interactive situation and by others as the resulting subjective experience of basic relational processes such as caregiving, communicating and problem solving. Although Wynne and Wynne (1986) have argued that the use of the word intimacy to describe both the subjective experience and the process is confusing and blurs a crucial distinction, the preceding review has shown that regardless of the perspective from which one views intimacy there appear to be several common important factors.

In order to create and maintain an intimate relationship with a balance between closeness and separateness each individual needs to have a certain degree of maturity and a clear sense of their own identity. Both of these factors can be enhanced by an intimate relationship but to a certain degree are also necessary prerequisites.

Metacognitions; the way attempts at intimacy are appraised by one's partner, are also important. The crucial factors of this process that facilitate intimacy appear to be emotional self-disclosure and unconditional positive regard. When these conditions are met a transaction allows individuals to feel cared for, understood and validated. These are all important components of an intimate transaction.

There are many processes operating in any relationship, all of which interact to some extent. Any attempt to narrowly define intimacy oversimplifies a complex process and experience.

The aim of the present study is to utilise a largely qualitative approach to explore the nature of intimacy in a committed dyadic relationship. There is still much contention in the field of interpersonal relations over what is meant by the term intimacy. Clearly an important goal in contemporary society, a great deal is also still to be understood about how to achieve this objective and why some fail and others succeed. A more precise understanding of how the process works and what the components are would be a valuable contribution to the interpersonal relations field.

Rather than deriving an understanding of this concept through complex statistical procedures this study will involve recording and transcribing indepth interviews in order to be able to offer an illustration of the experiences of some couples. The current theories and model of intimacy outlined in the previous chapter will be re-examined in the light of the data collected.

The focus of interest in this study will be the intimacy process and experience; the unit of analysis, the couple. In accord with Rosenwald's (1988) requirement for a useful synthesis every attempt will be made to procure couples from a range of vantage points. Although articulate couples may provide a greater depth of information the stories of less articulate and less educated couples are seen as accounts of equal importance.

Non-sexual touching will be used as a window into intimacy. As one component of an intimate relationship it illustrates the struggle to achieve a balance between distance and closeness, and the necessity of communicating well.

Chapter 2

ON USING QUALITATIVE METHODOLOGY

The debate over the adequacy of methods derived from the natural sciences for social science research, seems to have drawn increasing attention in the past decade. In exploring the implications for psychology of what they call the "new philosophy of science" Manicas and Secord (1983) conclude that scientific theory is inadequate to explain or predict human behaviour. "...instances of behaviour or kinds of behaviour are the result of complex transactions at many different levels." (p. 404)

Given the complicated nature of human behaviour it may be that the level of specificity achieved in traditional nomothetic research is insufficient to account for the complex dynamics operating in a relationship, and for the individual differences involved. Not wishing to argue the superiority of one research method over another I have instead provided below:

- * A **rationale** for choosing primarily qualitative methodology.
- * An outline of the **qualitative methods of data collection** to be used in this study.
- * An outline of **qualitative methods of data analysis**.

RATIONALE

Birchneil (1988) outlines the difficulties of getting an accurate view of what marriage is really like. For example:

- a) People may blatantly lie.
- b) They may provide a socially acceptable version of what it is like.
- c) They may say what they think the researcher wants them to say.
- d) They may give a totally inaccurate account because they have deceived themselves into believing it.
- e) They may be as accurate as possible.

Given these difficulties, the private nature of this topic and the already mentioned complexity of human interaction it seems important to collect data in a way that allows people to be at ease, willing to reflect, willing to share themselves with the researcher and able to tell their own stories in their own words. Ann Oakley (1981) offers valuable insight into how to achieve this. After carrying out hundreds of interviews she concluded: "...personal involvement is more than dangerous bias - it is the condition under which people come to know each other and to admit others into their lives." (p. 58) Further, she suggests that it is important to become involved in a non-hierarchical way; to be open about the specific information required and to be willing to share of oneself in the same way others are expected to.

In corroboration, Stiles (1990) suggests that as there is no guarantee that a communication will mean the same to a receiver as it does to the sender, what is important is our ability to understand each other.

QUALITATIVE METHODS OF DATA COLLECTION

Research collaborators

Rather than seeking 'subjects' or 'respondents', participants in a qualitative study are invited to collaborate with the researcher in producing an account of the matter under investigation. Thus the power remains with participants to tell their own story in their own words. The alternative language reflects the inappropriateness of the researcher imposing a restrictive interviewing structure on the collaborators, or behaving in any way that may be construed as intimidatory. (For example presenting as an expert on the subject of interest.)

A range of viewpoints

Rosenwald (1988) suggests that the traditional logic of representative sampling used in quantitative research is inapplicable for a qualitative case study approach. Homogeneity is inappropriate: "To be sure of obtaining a useful synthesis, we want observers at a range of vantage points rather than crowded on one side only." (p. 247)

He recommends choosing participants who are best able to reveal the inner structure of the process under examination; "...give preference to those who are open, articulate, reflective and different from each other." (p. 247)

As the aim of qualitative research is to share observations and propose possible connections rather than show what is the case in a defined population it thus seems logical to choose as collaborators, people who represent a range of viewpoints. However Rosenwald's suggestion that this range be restricted to those who are reflective and articulate would surely limit the range obtainable. Though the information gathered may not be of such depth, the views of the less reflective and articulate members of our society are too important to be overlooked.

Yin (1984) describes multiple case studies as following a replication, rather than sampling logic. He suggests providing a combination of cases demonstrating:

- * A literal replication (those that fit a theoretical framework stating conditions under which a particular phenomenon is likely to be found) and
- * A theoretical replication (those that fit a theoretical framework stating conditions under which a particular phenomenon is not likely to be found).

Interviewing style

Traditionally interviewers have been instructed to never disclose their own opinions or answer questions, nor to be too friendly. Oakley (1981) criticizes this model as using the interview as a mechanical instrument for collecting data through a limited form of conversation where one person asks the questions and another gives the answers. She suggests from her own interviewing experience that the less the interviewer tries to be polite, detached and uncommunicative the more forthcoming people are with the information required.

Oakley (1981) believes it is not possible to resolve the contradiction between the need for rapport and the requirements of between interview comparability so it is pointless to attempt the perfect standardised interview. Mishler (1986) concurs; after detailed criticism of standard survey interview technique he concludes that in the interests of positivist goals the traditional interview model has overlooked other equally important issues.

By adopting an approach that is behavioural and anti-linguistic, relies on the stimulus-response model and decontextualizes the meaning of responses, researchers have attempted to avoid rather than to confront directly the interrelated problems of context, discourse and meaning. (p. 27)

Further to this Mishler contends that such technical solutions to the problem of precision as coding manuals, rigorous training programmes and multivariate statistical analyses can only offer an illusory sense of precision because they obscure the central problem; the relationship between discourse and meaning. He suggests that such everyday sources of mutual understanding as common knowledge, reciprocal aims, contextual understandings and shared assumptions are the factors that allow participants in an ordinary conversation to understand clearly what questions and answers mean. Any attempt to decontextualize an interview at any step in the process means that peoples' stories are removed from their cultural setting.

The empathic listening Mishler and Oakley recommend as an alternative to a traditional interviewing style is seen as the essential ingredient of connected knowing. (Belenky, Clinchy, Goldberger and Tarnule, 1986). Distinguishable from the separate or received knowing that is knowledge accepted from higher authorities, connected knowing refers to the understandings gained from a relationship in which each participant is willing to be him or herself, trust the other and listen.

Yin (1984) suggests that the requirements of a good case study researcher are that the researcher:

- * Ask good questions.
- * Be a good listener (not trapped by one's own ideologies and preconceptions).
- * Be adaptive and flexible so newly encountered situations are seen as opportunities, not threats.
- * Have a firm grasp of the issues being studied (to reduce the relevant information to manageable proportions).
- * Be unbiased by preconceived notions, including those derived from theory, so that the researcher can be sensitive and responsive to contradictory evidence.

It is clear that the closer an interview can come to an indepth conversation the more full and rich one can expect the resulting information to be. Paget (1983) found that when she was hesitant and searching in conducting an interview, this encouraged equally searching replies. Rather than interviewing from a standardised questionnaire Paget discovered that having entered a discussion with a framework of the information required, the answers given continually furnished the conversation. As detailed below, her subsequent analysis is grounded in the dialectic of the interview. Mishler (1986) confirms that respondents "...tell stories in response to direct, specific questions if they are not interrupted by interviewers trying to keep them to the "point". " (p. 69)

QUALITATIVE METHODS OF ANALYSIS

Assessing relative plausibility

The critical task in analysing narrative is to assess the relative plausibility of the various possible interpretations of the information gathered and not the determination of one "true interpretation". (Mishler, 1986) Further, it is important to acknowledge that the data gathered and subsequent analysis will give a partial view. This avoids the non-objectivity of assuming the study's aspect to be a global one. "As they each insist on their own truth they fragment the truth of the whole." (Rosenwald, 1988, p. 245)

Shared realities

Rosenwald (1988) warns of the importance, when studying individuals, of being aware of both subjectivism (losing sight of the totality) and objectivism (losing sight of the members making up the whole). He suggests bringing each story into conversation with the others to construct shared realities, acknowledging that "social conditions bring about and shape phenomena that individuals regard as not only private but unique." (p. 242)

Another purpose of bringing together the stories is that each one's conclusions are information needing replication by other stories in order to demonstrate the extent of replication logic and why certain "cases" can be predicted to have contrary results. (Yin, 1984).

Intertwining data collection and analysis

Miles (1979) amusingly describes his teams' efforts at establishing and applying formal methods of qualitative analysis; for example, an elaborate coding system. He concludes that these "...seemed reasonable and desirable, and reduced anticipatory analysis anxiety a good deal, (however) we found that the actual process of analysis during case writing was essentially intuitive, primitive and unmanageable in any rational sense..." (p. 597)

Formally the intentions of the research team were to formulate classes of phenomena into progressively more abstract concepts, to identify themes from the links between concepts and from this specify "if-then hypotheses". In order to then provisionally test these hypotheses the researchers would look for concomitant variation, try to rule out spurious or confounding factors, assess the conditions making for greater or lesser concomitant varying and look for intervening variables.

The method of analysis that evolved was to meet regularly during data collection to discuss their developing understandings and interpretations, to propose explanations, be challenged, obtain alternative explanations and identify new data needing to be collected.

Similarly Addison (1989) places an emphasis on identifying common or recurring themes, practices and attitudes and then progressing to a subsequent stage of becoming aware of patterns, flows and directions in behaviours. Addison insists on the researcher pursuing any understandings reached with the collaborators rather than assuming the initial interpretations made by the researcher are correct. Stiles (1990) calls this participant confirmation.

Grounding the Interpretation

Stiles uses the term grounding to refer to the process of linking abstract interpretations with concrete observations. He suggests illustrating any abstract statements with excerpts from participants' stories. These statements are obtained by compiling a list of significant topics from the transcripts, grouping the topics into themes and then discussing these themes from the perspective of relevant psychological theories and the researcher's own synthesis.

Interview Context

Mishler (1986) argues that as answers to questions often appear as narratives when not restricted by interviewers, support is given to the notion that narratives are a natural cognitive and linguistic form through which individuals attempt to organize and express meaning. He therefore recommends taping and transcribing the whole discourse, including making notes on body language, rather than

simply noting answers to questions and ending up with a collection of decontextualized responses.

Following on from this notion of people using narratives to make sense of their experiences is the question of how best to facilitate their efforts at doing so. Clearly the issue of power is an important one, and relates to Mishler's recommendation that interviewees be allowed to tell their own stories in their own words and have more control of the processes by which their words are given meaning.

A further decision encountered at the analytic stage of qualitative research is whether to treat a whole interview as "the story" and look for types and levels of coherence or whether to see the interview as containing several stories and other types of accounts as well.

Reliability and validity

Addison (1989) questions the appropriateness of applying positivist standards to research carried out in a non-positivist paradigm. " In interpretive research, validity, in the positivist sense of the word, is not at issue. Instead, appeals are made to an account's comprehensiveness, comprehensibility, intelligibility, credibility, meaningfulness, significance and fruitfulness for opening up new possibilities." (p. 55) In interpretive research truth is seen as an ongoing and unfolding process; it is not possible to verify or falsify an interpretation, only to clarify it.

Perhaps on the defensive against those who seek to pit one method against another, qualitative researchers have developed new ways of attempting to make their data reliable and valid and heightening the general trustworthiness of the material gathered and the interpretations made. Lather (1986) has suggested the following guidelines for establishing validity:

1/ Triangulation. This involves using multiple data sources, methods and theoretical schemes; seeking counterpatterns as well as convergences to increase the credibility of the data. Asking the wrong question can be a cause of invalid data; Stiles (1990) suggests the solution is to ask lots of questions. Triangulation offers the opportunity to ask lots of questions from quite different perspectives.

Jick (1979) offers "contextual description" as the most sophisticated triangulation design. This involves examining the same phenomenon from multiple perspectives and also at various depths. For example, a standardised questionnaire aims to include only the most discriminating and useful items and to cover the "field" comprehensively. An indepth interview can enrich the understandings gained from a standardised questionnaire by illuminating particular aspects and the related contextual elements. However Jick warns against what appears to be the underlying assumption made by the advocates of triangulation. The aim of triangulation is to exploit the assets and neutralize the liabilities. It is possible that each of the methods of data collection utilised will share the same weaknesses, in which case triangulation would be compounding rather than counterbalancing the weaknesses.

2/ Construct validity. For an account to have construct validity (Stiles (1990) calls this reflexive validity) the researcher must use "systematized reflexivity" to keep in touch with people's everyday experiences and avoid imposing theories on

them. The researcher documents how his or her perspectives and a priori theory have been altered by the logic of the data.

In order to facilitate both construct validity and the criterion of self reference mentioned below it is important that researchers acknowledge that they do not have neutral objectivity and include a statement of academic commitments (theories subscribed to), values, behavioural style and experience plus a record of changing thinking as the research progresses. Addison (1989) calls this making explicit the **forestructure** or framework of pre-understanding on which interpretations are based in recognition that there is no detached standpoint from which one can record reality.

Although it is not possible to completely separate oneself from ones' preunderstandings it is important to be as clear as possible about all relevant assumptions, beliefs and values and how these influence the research account. This seems necessary in order to prevent the analysis of data becoming the researcher's preunderstandings projected onto the process under investigation. Stiles (1990) adds that the purpose of this disclosure is to orient the reader, not to offer an hypothesis.

Yin (1984) suggests further practical steps that can be taken to establish appropriate operational measures for the concepts being studied: these include using multiple sources of evidence, establishing a chain of evidence during the data collection phase and having informants review the draft case study report.

3/ Face validity. To establish credibility for the data obtained the researcher needs to return to each subject with a tentative analysis for further discussion in order to refine the original findings. Stiles (1990) calls this participant confirmation, a type of criterion validity achieved by recognizing the dialectical nature of "truth".

4/ Catalytic validity. In contrast to the positivist tenet of researcher neutrality, this principle acknowledges that the research process can help participants to know better their reality in order to transform it. Stiles (1990) refers to "the degree to which the research process re-orient, focuses and energizes participants." (p. 32) If the researcher, in collaboration with the participants, produces an interpretation that helps the participants to see their situation differently and energizes them to make changes, then the account has catalytic validity.

Stiles (1990) has proposed two further types of validity to add to the four outlined above:

5/ Coherence. The interpretation must 'hang together'. This concept includes such considerations as:

- a) Do all parts of the story fit with each other?
- b) Are the elements to be interpreted and the relations between them comprehensive?
- c) Does the interpretation usefully incorporate new elements as they arise?
- d) Does the interpretation confirm/ supplement/ elaborate/ simplify/ supersede rival explanations?

The coherence of an account needs to be judged by both the researcher and colleagues not involved in the research project.

Agar and Hobbs (1982) propose a model of narrative analysis based on the concept of coherence. In this model the narrative strategies and the narrators' intentions are the basis of analysis; that is, themes and their relations to each other are identified and studied. The Agar and Hobbs model describes three general types of coherence:

- a) Global coherence- when particular statements relate to and serve the speaker's overall intent for the conversation.
- b) Local coherence- when utterances relate to parts of the text.
- c) Thermal coherence- when utterances are congruent with the stated cognitions (values, beliefs, etc.)

6/ Criterion of self evidence. The interpretation needs to fit into the context of all the evaluators' other beliefs and answer his or her concern. Addison (1989) further suggests that as researchers learn more about the subject of research they will learn more about themselves. He suggests this an important hermeneutic principle of grounded interpretive research.

Mishler (1986) quotes Levy (1981) in his presidential address to the British Psychological Association. Levy suggests that perhaps methodological problems are in fact substantive problems.

We often speak of "validating" rather than "discovering the meaning of". And we are tempted to speak of such things as objectivity, truth, proof and methodology where I believe we mean to refer to the more human and social qualities of communicability, generalizability, plausibility and interpretability.
(p. 110)

In analysing peoples' stories it seems appropriate to move the emphasis from technical issues of reliability and validity (ie. the investigators' problems) onto respondent's problems in constructing coherent stories to make sense of their experiences. When one can allow this natural process to occur as unimpeded as possible, then the results will be meaningful data about peoples' experiences.

Chapter Three

METHOD

A case study is an empirical inquiry that:

- *investigates a contemporary phenomenon within it's real life context; when
- *the boundaries between phenomenon and context are not clearly evident: and
- *multiple sources of evidence are used.

(Yin, 1984)

Subjects

Five couples were recruited to the role of research collaborators by word of mouth: their ages ranged from 27 to 62, length of relationship from 5 to 27 years. This was a second marriage for one individual, a defacto relationship for another couple; the remaining three couples were married for the first time. A range of occupations were represented including teacher, manager, retired public servant, child raiser, train driver, counsellor / community worker and homemaker.

The only initial criterion for selection was a minimum length of relationship of five years; it was thought this would allow time for the "honeymoon" phase (Roughan and Jenkins, 1990) to be over and settled patterns of relating established. Further selection criteria emerged during the process: some couples who initially expressed interest withdrew as they learned in more detail of what would be required. Willingness to self-disclose emerged as a self-selecting criterion.

As couples were recruited and demographic gaps became apparent, these were countered as much as possible. For example as all four members of the first two couples were tertiary qualified professionals, subsequent participants were sought with fewer or no qualifications.

One obvious omission in the research sample is the lack of tangata whenua of Aotearoa. Several Maori couples were approached and in each case the women were hesitant though willing to take part but the men were not, making reference to the "tapuness" (sacredness) of their relationship; talking about it was seen as tantamount to degrading the relationship, and to "whakamaa"; personal embarrassment and discomfort at the prospect of disclosing information about their intimate relationship.

Interview Procedure

First Meetings.

These were held at each couple's home during July and early August with the dual focus of providing information on what being involved in the research would entail and on building rapport. If couples agreed to become research collaborators the Waring Intimacy Questionnaire (see Appendix B, section 2) was introduced and administered.

Permission was gained from each collaborator to repeat his or her story using a pseudonym. Specific information on occupation and other identifying details was omitted from the couples' stories.

Second Meetings.

The venue for the second meeting was decided by the couple; three were held at their own homes, two at the home of the researcher. The tape recorder was introduced at the outset while rapport was being re-established; couples began talking about their relationship as they felt ready or when the researcher judged them to be ready. In situations where the discussion did not proceed independently the researcher led with general questions such as "What are the things that are important to you in your relationship?" and "What would you like to be different?". Subsequent questions mainly sought clarification of statements made, although when an area had not been covered open ended questions of the form "Tell me about ..., what does that mean to you?" were asked.

Specific questions were asked to establish what the term "non-sexual touching" meant to participants and whether they had clearly established a separation of non-sexual from sexual touching in their relationship.

These meetings ranged from one to three hours and took place during August to early September. Each meeting was completed with attention given to the collaborators' comfort with the process and with an acknowledgement of the sensitive nature of the material being discussed. The researcher, a relationship counsellor, discussed the possibility that the couple might wish to talk further about some of the issues raised during the interview and offered assistance in

helping them to find a counsellor if they felt the need. After the meeting the researchers' impressions and observations of the process between each couple and of each individual's comfort level with the interview situation were recorded.

A follow-up telephone call was made within two weeks of the second interview to maintain contact, to check that no problems had arisen after the interview and to remind participants that there would be a third meeting at a later date to seek their validation of the analysis made of their stories.

Third Meetings.

When contacted to make an appointment for the final meeting one couple, Jean and Mac, chose not to have a third meeting or to receive a copy of their story, reporting that they found the earlier exploration of their relationship upsetting. However both volunteered to give information on the telephone about the way they rated the importance of each intimacy component and the reasons for this, and both were willing to have their story included in the study.

Several days before the final interview the following items were sent to the remaining four couples:

- 1/ A copy of the couple's story as interpreted by the researcher.
- 2/ A rating scale (See Appendix B, section 5) for assessing the importance to participants of each component of intimacy as operationally defined by Waring (1984).
- 3/ A simple diagram illustrating Reis and Shaver's (1988) model of the intimacy process.
- 4/ A covering letter inviting reactions to these materials.

At this meeting, the researcher recorded all feedback, particularly noting whether couples had disagreed with the interpretation of their story. Rating scales were collected and feedback sought on the model of the intimacy process. When the researcher felt that participants clearly understood the model, they were asked what role non-sexual touching might play for them in their experience of this intimacy process and the ensuing discussion was recorded.

Finally the comments of participants were sought about their experience of being research collaborators in this study.

Analysis

The process of analysis incorporated multiple data sources: focused interview, direct observation and questionnaire. This process is described below in a chronological sequence showing the development of the researcher's understanding of the concepts involved.

Scoring. The Waring Intimacy questionnaire was scored and the data used to give a profile of each individual's ratings of eight components of the relationship, a social desirability score and a total intimacy score.

Transcribing. Four of the five tapes were transcribed verbatim, in full; the fifth, recorded during a protracted dinner contained discussions clearly not of relevance to this research topic. These pieces of discourse were omitted in the transcription process. The transcripts were read several times by the researcher and passages containing references to any aspect of the relationship were highlighted and annotated. Common topics and some unique to particular couples became apparent.

Story Topics. Each couple's "story" was then written up in terms of these topics. The researcher's observations were incorporated and quotations from participants were used as illustrations. The transcripts and stories were read by an independent person to check for:

- 1/ Omissions- had the researcher overlooked any information of relevance?
- 2/ Alternative interpretations- could the couple's statements be interpreted differently?

Minor adjustments were made, however the major reliability and validity check was made by the collaborators in the final meeting.

Intimacy Matrix. At this stage in the analysis it became clear that there were both similarities and differences between the view of the relationship derived from data from the Waring Intimacy Questionnaire and data derived from the narrative. A checklist matrix was drawn up incorporating questionnaire scores and quotations from the narrative for each of the components delineated by Waring. In order to address some of the discrepancies (eg. where an individual

had talked positively about their sexual relationship but received a low score for this component) it was decided to seek a rating from participants as to how important each of these components was to them and an indication of why. This provided a contrast to the initial questionnaire focus on rating the quantity and quality of each component in their relationship.

Balances and Imbalances. The Waring data and the narratives were used to assess areas in which a couple appeared to have achieved a balance in their relationship and areas in which there were imbalances. The Roughan and Jenkins (1990) framework was used as the basis for this assessment.

The Intimacy Process. From a review of the information on the balances and imbalances in various components of each relationship the relevance of the process of achieving balance or at least acceptance of imbalance became apparent. The question arose: how was it that some couples' relationships endured significant imbalances and maintained intimacy, yet others didn't? It was considered that Reis and Shaver's (1988) model of the intimacy process closely reflected the process of balancing reported by couples with intimate relationships in the present study. A simple diagram of this model was drawn in preparation for the third interview.

Intimacy Themes. When the main topics for each couple were brought together several important themes became apparent. These are discussed in the light of contemporary models and theories of intimacy in the final chapter.

Chapter Four

THE COUPLES' STORIES

It is the stories that persons have about their lives that determines both the ascription of meaning to experience and the selection of those aspects of experience that are to be given expression.

(Michael White, 1989, p. 7)

Although it is clearly not possible for narratives to encompass the full richness of peoples' lives or provide scientifically objective descriptions, the stories recorded here offer a fertile insight into five couples' experiences of intimacy.

As Stiles (1990) explains, "...the facts are imbued with interpretation." (p. 42) There is no guarantee that each story will mean the same to the reader as it means to the couple. However the collection of these stories was based on empathy, the information allowed to remain in context and each story as presented here has been confirmed and accepted by its "owners" as accurately representing their perception of their experiences of intimacy. Thus the following stories are presented as valid contributions towards understanding the nature of intimacy.

In this chapter each couple's story is presented in terms of the main topics arising from the discussions. The quotations are presented exactly as transcribed from the taped interview; the temptation to omit grammatical errors and hesitations in speech was resisted in order to capture as well as possible the flavour of the couples' stories.

The overall findings on the nature of intimacy will be presented in Chapter 5. Each couples' story will be brought into conversation with the others to move from perspectival images to shared realities. (Rosenwald, 1988) In the final chapter these findings will be discussed in the light of models and theories of intimacy. "A narrative embodies a theory and expresses it implicitly." (Stiles, 1990, p. 40)

Ian and Elizabeth

Ian and Elizabeth, both tertiary trained professionals, have been married for twenty seven years. Ian is 51, Elizabeth 49; they have four adult children who have all left home now. This has entailed a period of change for this couple as Elizabeth has moved over the last few years from being family centred to considering her future career options.

For both, their Christian faith is a central part of their lives. Some years ago Elizabeth and Ian attended a Marriage Encounter weekend which gave them the skills to communicate very effectively; subsequently they have been running similar weekend courses.

Intimacy Components

1/ Verbal Communication

Both intelligent, articulate people Elizabeth and Ian report having had long, indepth conversations throughout their relationship. However their method of communicating changed after the Marriage Encounter weekend, particularly helping them at that time to deal with the stresses of a career change for Ian which necessitated home based work and periods of travel:

Interviewer: "So, so how did things change with that weekend?
Was it primarily that you were communicating more deeply?"

Elizabeth: " We were communicating our feelings, which we had not really been doing before then. And the system that we had before that really took a lot more time than we've had with the change, with the coming and going. Our system worked, what I would say, reasonably well if we were there all the time and nothing changed. But as soon as he was away for a while and came back again, this reuniting process was very lacking, it got very stressful, and so ah, um learning how to talk about our feelings made our communication process more accurate, um, more detailed, ahh, more efficient, we could go to greater depths more quickly."

and further:

Ian: " ... I think it wasn't the ability to express feelings in itself that was beneficial, but the way in which by doing so we were able to understand each other, and where, where each of us was coming from..."

The skills of self disclosure and the resulting increased understanding of the other seem to have been important factors in building what appears to be a strong, and intimate relationship between two people who in some ways are not highly compatible, as will be described later.

Elizabeth describes parts of this building process:

Elizabeth: "And we still have stressful times, but we have the tools now to deal with these times and that process of being able to say how we are feeling, helps to change habits. When things were difficult I would withdraw into myself and um, and process things internally, which is a long slow job and shuts down in, in relating to other people, quite often.... And um, I think it would be true to say from then on (since the Marriage Encounter weekend) our ability to change has improved, our ability to negotiate and um, ah, yes, to keep together in the midst of change."

Later, Elizabeth describes another intimacy building breakthrough for her when she discovered at the Marriage Encounter weekend that she did not need to take responsibility for whatever Ian was feeling:

Elizabeth: "Ian put on a rip-roaring rage, his face went purple, and for the first time in our married lives I could be alongside and sympathetic; he was angry. Because of just the little bit that I had experienced from Friday night through to Saturday afternoon, I had no fear, he was furious, and I was sympathetic."

Interviewer: " So you left the responsibility for the anger with him? "

Elizabeth: "It was all his....For the first time it was so releasing, just so releasing, and of course wonderful for intimacy."

Interviewer: "How?"

Elizabeth: " How? I could share the feelings that he had and be sympathetic. He felt really angry and it wasn't against me, I wasn't threatened, our relationship wasn't threatened. I could let him be angry, I could even perhaps help him to, to ease that anger somehow."

Talking and the resulting intimacy are not only ends in themselves for Elizabeth, they also facilitate sexual willingness:

Ian: "There have been times when Elizabeth has said it would be good to make love because we've had a really good talk. Now I don't see the talking and the sex being related in that way."

Elizabeth: "And there have been times when I've said I can't possibly have sex, we've said not two words to each other all day. Switch on the light, lets have a half hour's chat then I might be able to co-operate." (laughs)

Interviewer: "Does that mean that talking intimately together makes you feel closer?"

Elizabeth: "Somehow it um, it opens the way to where my feelings are, or something like that, because my feelings do tend to get buried and um, communication seems to unblock the feelings inside me."

2/ Doing things together.

For Ian, companionship is working side by side on a project whereas for Elizabeth it is "sharing what's being going on in my head." However, as described further in section 4/ Ian and Elizabeth have negotiated to find ways of meeting both of their needs in joint activities as they see this as an important focus of their relationship:

Elizabeth: " Going for walks together is an activity we often do while talking."

3/ Supporting each other, loyalty, friendship, mutual respect.

When Elizabeth returned to university for a year's fulltime study recently Ian was happy to support her by taking a greater share of the household tasks, making himself available and arranging his programme to suit Elizabeth's.

This appeared to be a relatively new role for Ian:

Elizabeth: "In the past, I think the support has been much more one way, um....I can remember an early image that I used to get in my mind, that I felt as if I was on the end of a rope and you were rock climbing and exploring wonderful things out of sight to me, and the little words would come up "give me a bit more rope and I can just get a look at this something-or-other" that you wanted to reach for and I had a little dotted line and thought; if I could let go this rope a bit, I could, you know, have a look at that

over there, but I was too busy hanging onto your rope."

Much less aware in the earlier years of their marriage, of the tasks of forming a relationship that was healthy and enabling for them both, Ian and Elizabeth describe themselves as sliding into traditional gender roles as soon as Elizabeth became pregnant with their first child and only many years later beginning to negotiate their way out of these roles.

4/ Negotiation, co-ordinating with the other, achieving balance.

The complexities of co-ordinating with someone else seem more apparent to Elizabeth than to Ian:

Ian: " The expectation is that we will go to bed at the same time and we will get up at the same time. That's the expectation and we fit in with that."

Interviewer: " Do you remember how that expectation came about? Is it something that you actually negotiated at some stage?"

Ian: "I don't think we had to, we just did it, either because we came to know it was an expectation-"

Interviewer: " That you would fit in?"

Ian: "Yes, or because we tended to have a similar lifestyle anyway..."

Elizabeth: "I see it differently. I can remember, um, deciding to do that because we found that you didn't like going to bed sooner because when I came you woke up and had trouble getting back to sleep. And so for me to keep you waiting was, was quite a thing. There was a lot of pressure on me to go to bed at the same time as you did."

Now this couple negotiate to make arrangements that meet both of their needs, for example Ian's interest in doing things together and Elizabeth's in talking together:

Elizabeth: "So our choice of holidays is along that line too. We like cycling together, so we're doing that together, just the two of us but we have stop- offs when we can talk; long lunch times when we can talk, share ideas and so on."

They have also found that the technique they learned at the marriage encounter

weekend of having a written dialogue on major issues of disagreement is a very effective form of negotiation for them.

5/ Relationship Boundaries

In earlier days Elizabeth and Ian did not discuss with each other how they would divide their time between children, families of origin, themselves, their partner, work etc., they just "blundered (their) way through" with Elizabeth's emphasis being on the family and the majority of Ian's time being spent outside the family. However this did not mean that Ian was detached from the family:

Elizabeth: " (Ian was) always asking questions, being observant, picking up cues and clues and was very motivated to be in touch and knowing what was going on in the household...I tended to be rather reclusive and thankful to have my home and that little circle of people to be involved with, so I knew what was going on simply because I was there. If I'd gone out to work every day I wouldn't have been nearly as in touch because I didn't have that curiosity and demand to know everything."

Now they discuss fully how they will divide their loyalties to themselves, their relationship and to wider systems such as work. Both acknowledge the impossibility of getting all of their needs met inside their relationship and seem to lead full and varied lives, however both seem clear that making a contribution to their relationship is an important part of their lives. There was no sign of either Ian or Elizabeth attempting to retain control over each other.

6/ Separation of sexual and non-sexual touching.

For much of their relationship Elizabeth had felt that most touching between them was sexual. For Ian there was a "middle area" that he saw as unclear. Both came to see the importance of drawing a clear division between the two:

Elizabeth: " It must.. I don't exactly remember, it must have had something to do with our first marriage encounter weekend. Being able to talk about things because, um, I do remember vaguely coming to realise that our touching was definitely hindered by my fears that if I was at all responsive I'd be called upon to go the whole hog, and, um, I wasn't going to do that. So I would draw the line before I touched or, or responded at all. And so I can remember our lives being quite, um quite non-touching."

The result of their negotiation on this topic was the invention of the nsh, (pronounced inch) a non-sexual hug (in which no-one is expected to go the whole mile):

Ian: "If we have said let's have an nsh it has no sexual connotations.. there is great value in physical contact, in hugs, separate from the sexual dimension, so it's something that is worth doing for it's own sake, not as a step towards..."

7/ Significance of non-sexual touching

Separating out sexual and non-sexual touching has been of great importance and benefit to Ian and Elizabeth in various ways:

a) As a form of nurturing:

Elizabeth: " .. I could come in from teaching at school feeling very depleted and say 'I need an nsh' like someone else would say 'I need a drink' or something and a long, no strings attached hug, did wonders... I don't know whether we consciously made the decision, but it was never denied. We have never needed to deny one another an nsh. So that's been a very effective thing."

b) As a way to increase the amount of enjoyable physical touching between them.

Ian: " I mean sometimes in an nsh we are physically more wrapped around each other than we would be ah, in fairly advanced stages of lovemaking really... apart from actual intercourse."

c) For both Elizabeth and Ian, non-sexual touching relieves the tension of not having as much sexual contact as Ian would like. For Elizabeth:

Elizabeth: " I find um, I'm not, not really a very physical person anyway, living mostly just in my head and I related to this question (in WIQ) that sex is more like work than play and I've tended to set limits on almost everything Ian really enjoys, most physical things... So for me to separate the touching part so that's freely available all through the day, ah, relieves some of the pressure, um on sex..."

In contrast the tension relief for Ian came more from him avoiding physical and

intellectual arousal by he and Elizabeth making clear that the touching was going to be non-sexual, before making contact:

Ian: "I think that's part of the arousal mechanism that there is going to be tension. It equips one to, to greater action!"

For both, this has reduced the amount of conflict experienced over this issue. Although Elizabeth has occasionally enjoyed the experience of being sexually aroused and satisfied, she professes having little interest in sex and often receiving little from it. As she chooses to sometimes make love with Ian in order solely to meet his needs, Elizabeth sees non-sexual touching as a way of meeting her needs so that she is not "giving out of my own emptiness."

d) Though he values intercourse highly and feels "fully masculine" afterwards having matched his image of how things ought to be in an ideal relationship, Ian finds non-sexual touching an alternative source of validation:

Ian: "Sometimes an nsh has sort of the implication that you enjoy me, like me, even without sex and that has value."

However, an nsh cannot be as potentially validating for Ian as sexual contact:

Ian: "When I talk about my attitude to sexual intercourse as being a performance that can be measured and ah the evaluation that I might put on it affects my self esteem, well by contrast an nsh is always, um one hundred percent. Now that means that it is always satisfying but never as much challenge and fun as sex."

e) With the limits already set by definition, Elizabeth is relieved of her familiar task of having to limit Ian and feels she can give and receive with less inhibition.

At the final meeting, Ian and Elizabeth accepted Reis and Shaver's (1988) diagram of the intimacy model. Elizabeth described non-sexual touching as "a fast track through the filter system" offering validation and caring regardless of fears, needs, motives etc. Ian added that although he felt Elizabeth did not always understand what he was trying to express to her, he definitely got validation and caring from non-sexual touching.

Elizabeth further described non-sexual touching as:

"guaranteed access (because expectations are limited)"

"A password"

"Stabilising, reassuring while acknowledging there are other needs that need attending to also. It's like holding with one hand while you shake up with the other with non-sexual touching giving security to cope while struggling with needs, fears etc."

Ian added that non-sexual touching for him was:

" something very specific and the specificity means it has limits or boundaries which enables the fast tracking by lessening the problems that might develop from an individual's goals, motives, needs and interpretations. Because it is specific it's something you can do even if you don't feel particularly warm towards the other person; you can still affirm togetherness."

8/ Value/belief systems including emphasis put on quality of relationship.

Alongside of the pleasure and satisfaction they appear to now get from relating well, Ian and Elizabeth's Christian Faith and commitment to the institution of marriage have both played a role in maintaining their relationship:

Ian: "I guess there's a strong underpinning role been played by our value system which says marriage is for keeps. So for times of disillusionment, whatever, we worked through them- opting out is not an option."

9/ Male/female differences.

For much of their marriage Elizabeth appears to have been quite submissive, though neither she nor Ian were aware of this at the time. Avoiding conflict seems to have been an important motivator for Elizabeth. More recently she has become aware of and seems to be very effectively asserting, her wishes; though Ian does not appear at all resistant to this he also does not seem aware of the costs of this previous submission. An example of this is cited in section 4.

Traditional stereotypes describe women as having an expressive emphasis, men instrumental. Ian's emphasis on doing things together and Elizabeth's on sharing her internal thoughts and feelings seem to reinforce this stereotype. Likewise Elizabeth describes having felt responsible for Ian's feelings for much of their relationship, as outlined in section 1. Ian does not share this feeling of

responsibility but has experienced sometimes feeling responsible for putting things right.

Ian sees himself as highly motivated sexually, Elizabeth expresses little interest in sex however their differences extend beyond this. For Elizabeth there are various components to sex that she can clearly separate. She reports feeling fulfilled by having her needs met in just some of those components:

Elizabeth: "You see if all your eggs are in the sex basket, all your touching, your pleasure, your communication, all that's involved in sex, if it's all in the intercourse basket, um, you're either totally deprived or, it's a real conflict area.

Ian sees it differently:

Ian: "...for Elizabeth intimacy is a bundle of paths, all of which are very important and perhaps of equal importance. Sexual, non-sexual, physical, communication and perhaps throw in spiritual as well- they are all a tightly wrapped bundle. For me, I don't think they're like that. I think sex is a far more clear cut on its own sort of thing, and it doesn't have the close relationship with verbal communication and um non-sexual physical touch and so on. So it would be possible for me to have a very satisfying sexual experience without those other things present."

For Ian sex equals pleasure, fun, validation and feelings of succeeding and masculinity; for Elizabeth sex is often:

"...part of the way I minister to him, if he's feeling down and out, if he's had a bad day, or if he's struggling. What's good for him is good for us."

10/ Change

As described in section 9 a major change has occurred in this relationship over the years since Elizabeth and Ian have learned to take responsibility for their own feelings and needs. This appears to have coincided with family responsibilities reducing:

Elizabeth: "I don't think it's still troubling us but it did for a while. I realised that ah, I'd just bought into something that I had inherited, from my own family probably. Unthinking, both of us, just unthinking."

11/ Identity, confidence.

In order to cope with the change referred to above, both Elizabeth and Ian must have been sufficiently clear of their own identity; they certainly present as confident and capable individuals. For Elizabeth this has been something she has had to work at:

Elizabeth: "...a continual struggle to have self confidence."

12/ External factors

Elizabeth: " Well, the early years of our marriage, the first nine years, we were (overseas) and my experience of life was such that I needed to stick with him, I couldn't survive really, it was not an option to leave, I didn't feel I could manage.. The crisis came back in New Zealand where there was sort of more looseness, not the same pressure on us to keep together and then, I think um, there were various other supports. There was the church, other Christian companions, um who could hear us when we complained and were supportive um, and, and more nourishment I suppose for me."

In order to bring together the data collected from the Waring Intimacy Questionnaire and the narratives a checklist matrix has been produced incorporating questionnaire scores (WIQ), deviations from the mean (SD's) and quotations from the narrative for each of the components of intimacy as operationally defined by Waring. Some discrepancies between the two sources were evident so a further rating was sought and incorporated into the intimacy matrix. This provides some information on how important (HI) each component is to the participant and why, in contrast to the Waring Intimacy Questionnaire which focuses on rating the quality and quantity of the various aspects of intimacy.

Table 1 INTIMACY MATRIX - ELIZABETH

<u>Intimacy Components</u>	<u>Example</u>	<u>WIQ</u>	<u>SD's</u>	<u>HI</u>	<u>Why Important</u>
<u>Conflict Resolution</u>	"Learning how to talk about feelings made the communication process more accurate, detailed and efficient.	9	+0.5	9	"We resolve problems so much more quickly now."
<u>Affection</u>	"One of the things that's been very good all the way through is that we (are) friends."	9	+0.6	6	"..offers reassurance, nourishment and warmth for the other person."
<u>Cohesion</u>	"(Ian's) companionship is increasingly important to me."	7	-0.2	9	"I value a home base from which to venture out."
<u>Sexuality</u>	"I'm not really a very physical person."	4	-1.3	5	"Sex is primarily to meet Ian's needs."
<u>Identity</u>	"..A continual struggle to have self-confidence."	8	+0.4	5	"Everything else goes better for me when my self-esteem needs are met."
<u>Compatibility</u>	Companionship is "sharing what's been going on in my head" whereas Ian likes to "do things."	4	-1.5	4	"Though our interests are different we can still share our lives well."
<u>Autonomy</u>	Previously immersed in family, now enjoying following her own interests and seeking challenge.	10	+1.2	7	"I'm enjoying the personal fulfillment and stimulation missed in earlier years."
<u>Expressiveness</u>	"..being able to say how we are feeling helps to change habits."	7	+1.2	9	"Communication seems to unblock the feelings inside me."
<u>Total Intimacy</u>		30	+1.1		
<u>Social Desirability</u>		0	-1.5		

Table 2 INTIMACY MATRIX - IAN

<u>Intimacy Components</u>	<u>Example</u>	<u>WIQ</u>	<u>SD's</u>	<u>HI</u>	<u>Why Important</u>
<u>Conflict Resolution</u>	"The technique is that you write and then you exchange a dialogue with each other."	8	+0.1	7	"It helps to show where the other is coming from and leads to resolution."
<u>Affection</u>	"There is great value in hugs."	8	+0.2	8	"Hugs have "the implication that you enjoy me, like me even without sex."
<u>Cohesion</u>	"Marriage is for keeps."	7	-0.2	10	"That's part of my Christian faith."
<u>Sexuality</u>	"I'd always be glad of more sex."	9	+1.1	9	"I don't see sex as bound up with other forms of communication, it's important on it's own."
<u>Identity</u>	"My self confidence is enhanced by achievements and that includes things we do together."	7	-0.4	8	"I believe feeling sure of yourself leads to positive behaviour towards your partner."
<u>Compati- bility</u>	"I like to be actively involved in a project, rather than just talking."	6	-0.7	6	"When we can walk and talk together then I'm happy."
<u>Autonomy</u>	"Probably time with the kids missed out at times, due to work demands."	10	+1.0	5	"My job and my home life are important to me."
<u>Expressiveness</u>	"..By doing so (expressing feelings) we're able to understand each other."	6	-0.7	6	"It's part of resolving areas of disagreement."
<u>Total Intimacy</u>		29	+0.8		
<u>Social Desirability</u>		0	-1.5		

Mac and Jean

Mac, a retired civil servant is 63; Jean, a mother and housewife, 54. They have been married for twenty seven years. After a brief separation ten months ago Mac and Jean had some marriage counselling and reconciled, though they are still far from pleased with their relationship. Jean terminated the counselling as she found the process far too painful; it seems to have facilitated getting in touch with much hurt and anger for her.

Though all three of us were concerned that taking part in this research would be too distressing for Jean, she agreed to "give it a go" on the understanding that we would stop at her request and that strict confidentiality procedures would be followed.

Mac, a widow for three years, proposed to Jean after writing to her overseas for one year. She accepted, flew to New Zealand where the couple met for the first time and married within days. Jean immediately took over the role of mother for Mac's two young children so she and Mac had no opportunity to develop their relationship on their own; they subsequently had two further children. It is doubtful that a high degree of intimacy was ever established between this couple; it certainly does not exist at present.

Intimacy Components

1/ Verbal communication

A clear feature of this relationship is the poor standard of verbal communication. Both speak wistfully of their courtship by correspondence and their inability to establish that level of intimacy once they lived together:

Jean: " The letters were quite special, that was a good time you know."

Mac: " I don't express myself so well verbally but give me a piece of paper and I can say anything and say it well."

There seems to have been a brief period of pleasantness followed by a rapid deterioration. By their second wedding anniversary Jean and Mac slept in separate beds, by their tenth anniversary, in separate rooms. Both blame the

other for this deterioration; neither are willing to acknowledge the difficulties of forming a relationship and the differences between a long distance and live-in relationship.

As television has accompanied most meal and relaxation times, opportunities for quality communication may have been infrequent. Regardless, it is clear that neither partner has an understanding of the skills of self disclosing and responding appropriately. There were numerous occasions in the interview in which feelings were expressed indirectly and of course not responded to.

Jean: "No the old bastard (Mac's father) used to give me a cuddle when we went to visit and he'd have a maul while he was about it. I told Mac and he just said " He's an old man, he means no harm." I soon put a stop to it though, I just kept me distance."

Mac: "I'm sure he mean't no harm, he was an old man."

Further examples of this miscommunication will be provided under section 6.

Neither appear to understand or apply the principles of taking responsibility for their own feelings, needs and wants or of giving positive feedback, though Mac did express some praise of Jean to the interviewer.

2/ Doing things together.

As mentioned above Mac and Jean appear to have spent little quality time together without a third presence, whether it be children, television or food. (Both are considerably overweight):

Mac: "I like it when you bake me scones and we sit and eat them together."

Finding activities that they both enjoy seems to be at least part of the problem:

Mac: "...now I'm retired I thought we'd have the time to go places together but we can never agree on what to do. Anything I suggest Jean either doesn't like or she's watching something on T.V. and doesn't want to go out.

Jean: "I'm just not into opera thankyou very much, or your orchestra, I'd rather watch a good rugby game on telly any day.

3/ Supporting each other.

There is little sign of loyalty, friendship, mutual respect or support in this relationship. As mentioned above neither give much positive feedback or recognition of the other's contribution to the relationship or family. Whether this is a result of the animosity that has developed between Mac and Jean or has always been the case is unknown; Jean claims the former, Mac the latter.

4/ Decision making; co-ordinating with the other and achieving balance.

It is hard to find examples of Mac and Jean discussing anything in depth; responsibility for decision making appears to be divided between them along fairly traditional lines:

Mac: "Jean has made most of the decisions about the children and I've been responsible for managing money."

Their frequent arguments are an indication of their difficulties at handling conflict; arguments appear never to be resolved:

Interviewer: (Asking about the deterioration in their relationship in the early years) "And so what changed?"

Mac: " Jean just became less and less loving."

Jean: " That's right, blame me. It's always my fault. The guttering's broken at the side of our house and every time it rains the water pours down the side of the house and I've asked and asked Mac to fix it, but will he, he get around to it? No. And when it rains it's my fault. I'm not clever like him but I can make it rain! "

5/ Relationship boundaries.

Starting their relationship with two children from Mac's previous marriage and the arrival of a third child within a year would have offered an immediate challenge to the establishment of a strong marital or parental system. There are plenty of indications that this was not achieved and the difficulties of balancing loyalties to the relationship with loyalties to other systems (work, children) are apparent:

Interviewer: ".. I wonder how you see and balance your loyalties to your um family of origin, friends, partner, children and self? How do you decide how much time and energy you give to each?

Mac: "Well of course I've been retired for the last three years so it's much easier now-"

Jean: "I don't think it's much different actually; you never used to do much for anyone other than yourself and you don't do much for anyone now. Of course the kids have left home now apart from our youngest daughter and neither of us see much of her. I don't blame her for not being around, Mac's never had much time for her."

Mac: "Now that's not fair Jean, I always used to show an interest in what they were doing and you would tell me I was interrupting your television programme or putting too much pressure on the children. I think you've turned them against me over the years. They never, you certainly never encouraged them to respect me."

and further:

Mac: "The children were supposed to help with them (the dishes) but they used to argue their way out and Jean would tell me off if I tried to, you know make them do their job."

As will be further described below Jean seems to have established a much greater degree of intimacy with the children than with Mac, to the extent of forming an alliance with them against their father. With no close friends in New Zealand Jean can be seen as quite an isolated individual.

6/ The separation of sexual from non-sexual touching.

Mac and Jean offer an excellent illustration of what can happen with the failure to separate sexual from non-sexual touching. After a brief period of satisfactory sexual and other relations the situation declined rapidly. Mac would arrive home from work and greet Jean with a cuddle that included fondling her breasts. Tired and stressed from a day of handling the demands of children, Jean would be seeking comfort, reassurance and understanding. Instead she perceived Mac's greeting as making more demands on her and responded by rejecting him:

Mac: "..I used to tell you I found you attractive and YOU used to push me away or tell me off."

Jean: " That's because it was always when I was busy in the kitchen or something, or when I was tired. It was hard work bringing up your two plus our two you know.. (To interviewer):Whenever he said that he always wanted something."

Though Jean describes herself as "Not one of those touchy-feely types" she has always had and still has, lots of cuddles with her children, now adult:

Interviewer: So Jean, what's the difference between cuddling the children and cuddling Mac?"

Jean: "That's pretty obvious isn't it?"

Interviewer: "Um, I'd like to hear that from you."

Mac: "No, I don't think it is either."

Jean: "They didn't expect me to go off to bed with them."

Interviewer: "Do you mean to have sex, Jean?"

Jean: (Nods briefly).

Mac reports having had hand holding and occasional hugs in his first marriage until the time of his wife's illness. One wonders why that would have stopped during the illness, a time when it could be argued the need for the comfort of non-sexual touching would be high. Clearly there are several possible answers; that Mac's touching was not non-sexual and therefore rejected by his wife during her illness is one possibility. During the discussion it became clear that he may not have clearly grasped the difference between sexual and non-sexual touching:

Interviewer: "...It seems that when you hug you like to touch Jean's breasts?"

Mac: Well not all the time, but I thought she'd like that. I like them and I think, it's, well, its like flattering someone isn't it?"

Interviewer: "So you touch Jean's breasts as your way of saying I like your body?"

Mac: "Yes and I missed you and..I want you. Some women like to be wanted don't they? I like to be wanted. I would like to be wanted. Human beings give more love to their cats than to their husbands."

Interviewer: "Is that what touching means to you Mac? Feeling wanted?"

Mac: "Yes, yes feeling appreciated and wanted. Jean says I never did much around home but I went to work every day and earned a good salary, enough to provide for the family and we did alright."

Sadly, neither has grasped an understanding of the situation and the requirements for change. Both clearly have needs for nurturing and validation that could perhaps have been met non-sexually and potentially cleared the way for a satisfactory sex life; instead the couple continued to miscommunicate on this subject for some years:

Mac: "I never, never pressured Jean to have sex, never, not at all."

Jean: "Every time you touched me." (crying)

The culmination of not clearly separating sexual from non-sexual touching and the resulting resentment and frustration, could be argued to be a central factor in both the continuing tension and resentment between Mac and Jean and in Mac's current problem with impotence.

7/ The significance of non-sexual touching.

Neither partner appeared able to fully grasp the concept of non-sexual touching in a sexual relationship. There appears to be so much old anger and hurt between Mac and Jean that they consider themselves beyond making changes now.

Mac: "...Miscommunication, I think you're right you know, I wish you'd told me that twenty seven years ago...."

Interviewer: "Do you think, this is hypothetical of course, but I wonder what might have happened if you'd had some help to communicate your needs and wants and um, your intentions to each other more clearly?"

Jean: "I might not be so angry! Oh I just wish, I don't know what I wish..."

8/ Value and belief systems

One could argue that in believing they knew each other well enough to enter marriage without ever having met, Jean and Mac were demonstrating

considerable naivety. Mac states that he values civility, communication, joint activities and affection in a marriage. Jean makes no statement on this subject; having got her needs met as much as possible from her relationship with her children, it is difficult to clarify her beliefs in what a marriage involves.

9/ Male / female differences

Mac and Jean followed a fairly traditional division of role responsibility with Jean raising the children and Mac being the breadwinner. Some would argue that Mac's emphasis on sexual touching and Jean's emphasis on being cared for and understood also represent a common gender split.

10/ Change

The main example of change in this couple's life came very early in their marriage when they moved from relating by correspondence to living together; only months into their marriage the situation started to deteriorate.

It is also possible that Mac's retirement and "invasion" into Jean's territory was the final straw for Jean; she certainly cites that as a factor that led to their temporary separation.

11/ Identity, self esteem

Jean has a strong sense of herself as a caring and capable mother and has confidence and pride in her dressmaking skills. However she makes several references to her lack of intelligence:

Jean: "Mac's the only one with brains in the family."
and
"...I'm not clever like him but I can make it rain!"

It is difficult to say whether these comments are just a few of the many sarcastic jabs at Mac that Jean made during the interview, whether they were a result of a self esteem damaged by years of criticism that Mac did acknowledge after the interview, whether Jean already had a feeling of inferiority regarding her intelligence before she met Mac or whether this is an accurate judgement of her intelligence.

Mac's self esteem and identity seems to be firmly tied up with his job. He is clear that he has good writing skills and that he performed a worthwhile job well. He mentions not feeling valued or wanted by Jean or the children and now that he has retired he spends most of his time watching T.V. or hired videos.

Neither have followed up interests outside the home at all and food seems to play a major role in both of their lives; both Mac and Jean are considerably overweight.

12/ External Factors

There was nothing in Mac and Jean's story to indicate the presence of any external factors other than those already incorporated in the topics above.

In order to bring together the data collected from the Waring Intimacy Questionnaire and the narratives a checklist matrix has been produced incorporating questionnaire scores (WIQ), deviations from the mean (SD's) and quotations from the narrative for each of the components of intimacy as operationally defined by Waring. Some discrepancies between the two sources were evident so a further rating was sought and incorporated into the intimacy matrix. This provides some information on how important (HI) each component is to the participant and why, in contrast to the Waring Intimacy Questionnaire which focuses on rating the quality and quantity of the various aspects of intimacy.

Table 3 INTIMACY MATRIX - MAC

<u>Intimacy Components</u>	<u>Example</u>	<u>WIQ</u>	<u>SD's</u>	<u>HI</u>	<u>Why Important</u>
<u>Conflict Resolution</u>	In order to save arguments Mac "bought another T.V. and watches it in (his) bedroom."	0	-3.3	10	"If arguments aren't settled they keep on being brought up."
<u>Affection</u>	"Human beings give more love to their cats than to their husbands."	4	-1.8	9	"Affection makes me feel loved and wanted."
<u>Cohesion</u>	"I don't want to spend my old age alone."	7	-0.2	6	"It's too late for me to make a new life now."
<u>Sexuality</u>	"We had separate beds before we'd even been married for two years."	2	-2.4	7	"I would like to be wanted."
<u>Identity</u>	"Give me a piece of paper and I can say anything and say it well."	7	0.42	8	"If Jean was more like me we could have had some good discussions."
<u>Compatibility</u>	"..it's too late now anyway... I just want us to be civil to each other."	2	-2.6	7	"I'd like us to do things together but we can never agree on what."
<u>Autonomy</u>	Annual holidays were always spent with Mac's family.	7	-0.3	4	"I liked to keep in touch, see how they were, my responsibility as they got older."
<u>Expressiveness</u>	"I'm a man of letters, I don't express myself so well verbally."	3	-2.1	6	"I suppose we would have understood each other better.."
<u>Total Intimacy</u>		15	-2.5		
<u>Social Desirability</u>		0	-1.5		

Table 4 INTIMACY MATRIX - JEAN

<u>Intimacy Components</u>	<u>Example</u>	<u>WIQ</u>	<u>SD's</u>	<u>HI</u>	<u>Why Important</u>
<u>Conflict Resolution</u>	"You always talk down to me, ordering me as if I don't know nothing."	0	-3.0	8	"So people don't end up like us."
<u>Affection</u>	"The letters were quite special, that was a good time"	1	-3.6	7	"Everybody needs affection to keep going, I got mine from the kids."
<u>Cohesion</u>	"The kids needed us to stay together."	6	-0.7	7	"Marriage should be forever."
<u>Sexuality</u>	"I'm not against sex, I used to like it sometimes."	2	-2.3	5	"A woman likes to feel desirable."
<u>Identity</u>	"Mac's the only one with brains..I've always done a lot of sewing and enjoyed that."	6	-0.5	8	"I read an article in the Woman's Weekly about how important it is to know who you are."
<u>Compatibility</u>	"(Mac) never used to do anything much for anyone other than himself."	1	-2.8	7	"I'd like us to be a couple who do things together, go shopping up town sometimes."
<u>Autonomy</u>	"I left my parents behind when I left England..The kids are important to me."	4	-2.2	4	"Kids need to feel they always have a home where they're welcome."
<u>Expressiveness</u>	"We'd have a good yell sometimes but it never solved anything so I gave up trying."	3	-3.2	2	"I don't see the point."
<u>Total Intimacy</u>		9	-3.6		
<u>Social Desirability</u>		0	-1.5		

Brad and Janet

Brad and Janet are both 33 and have been living in a defacto relationship for the last 14 years. Describing themselves as hippies in their earlier years they still follow what to many would be an alternative lifestyle; with their two children they live in a double garage creatively turned into an amazingly lovely home.

Both have worked in a variety of jobs, mainly horticultural. Brad at present is the main childcarer and home person, fitting in some extramural studying while Janet is establishing a career in the caregiving field. She has completed Marriage Guidance counsellor training and currently divides herself amongst four part-time jobs and her family life.

Intimacy Components

1/ Verbal communication

Both Janet and Brad encountered communication difficulties in their relationship:

Brad: "...I think I communicated pretty well with people (in the past) but it's just over the last six or seven years I ended up closing in on myself.. almost a seige mentality. I kept everything to myself.."

Janet: "... I just recognized my dissatisfaction um of what was happening between Brad and I but I didn't see that as something that I could change, um, I felt quite hopeless with it.."

Through counselling Janet learned that her communication process, learned from her family, was mostly covert:

Janet: "...the expectation that if you love me you will know what I need."

As Janet progressed through counsellor training the new skills she was learning had an effect on their relationship, particularly in expressing and taking responsibility for feelings:

Janet: "I've found that some of the changes in the way that I communicate um, have enabled our communication to grow.. Making some changes in the way I listened and the way I spoke I think has helped a lot... I had to learn to argue."

Brad: " Yeah we used to niggle and that can get quite destructive ... And now I don't take on board, like you might have some anger, I don't take on board the anger, it's your anger.

I: "Do you do much of that.. expressing feelings to each other?"

Janet: "We have done more in the past two years, um, it's a lot less blaming than it used to be and the blaming used to get in the way."

For Brad self disclosure is an essential part, perhaps the very core, of intimacy:

Brad: "Intimacy is actually allowing somebody to see what's inside, what's in here, and that takes an awful amount of trust to do that...Intimacy can also lead onto discussing those subjects that are really painful, like um it could even be a criticism of something that person is or does; that part might be so painful that you leave it always to the last. You never get to that point unless intimacy has got to a level that you can actually touch on that point."

Brad acknowledged a difficulty in expressing negative feelings and asking for his needs to be met:

Brad: "...things that might hurt, um, it's also saying things that I might want. I haven't quite got through that yet."

For Janet:

"The most risky is asking ... for some of my needs to be met um that I haven't been feeling able to do so what I'm risking is the rejection of that part of me that needs."

Living in such a small space makes it difficult for Brad and Janet to find the privacy to communicate at this level; at present they either create an opportunity during the day while the children are at school or they have to wait until the children are asleep at night or go outside to talk.

2/ Doing things together

Again, the size of their living space has an effect on Brad and Janet's relationship; being able to be alone has become more important than spending time together:

Janet: It occurs to me just now that for a family that lives in six by six metres we have such very separate lives. I think to some degree it's because we live in such a small area that I've had to retreat from the communal area to get my privacy, my time... (As well as going out to work) I isolate myself by going inside (myself)."

3/ Supporting each other, loyalty, friendship, mutual respect.

Both Brad and Janet express an awareness of the other's needs, however because of Janet's work demands on her emotional energy she is less often in a position to give than Brad is. See section 5 for an example of this.

At the final meeting Brad requested an alteration to this section; believing this aspect of their relationship had been misrepresented:

"I don't believe I give more to Kate than she gives to me. She contributes particularly by initiating conversations on the hard things and by sharing the things she is learning with me."

4/ Negotiation, co-ordinating with the other, achieving balance

Janet and Brad appear to be able to discuss well and reach agreement on parenting matters and other major issues; both are happy that the day to day decisions are made by the person on the spot at the time. Though they report having fairly easily made the decision to swap roles putting this into place was far from easy for both:

Janet: "I felt working full time I needed a 'wife', a support person and that wasn't how Brad saw it."

Brad: "I was struggling with my image, I guess. Trying to get past how others saw me and get beyond my conditioning. For a while I had to work hard at believing I was a man even though I wasn't acting like men are 'supposed to'.

Though both are comfortable and settled in their new roles, Brad and Janet still find they have to work at co-ordinating with each other in this area:

Brad: "We had a situation the other day where I came home from visiting my parents and even though you had everything there I just got organised, just started doing things and I realised, it was

all on top of what you'd just done. I was so used to doing it !"

Some of their co-ordination however seems to happen without deliberate effort:

Brad: "..And every now and then we have a time when we kind of come together, it's quite magical."

Janet: " There's no, no regularity in this. It seems like there's a build up of need and you get to a point where right, well I need to touch base, I need to come back to be a partnership and I need to see who I'm living with."

In the area of touching, as will be explored further below, both are aware of an imbalance in that Brad likes more touching than Janet:

Janet: ".. I'm aware that I don't give him as much touching as he would like so he has to ask me...So in many respects I need to consciously be aware of giving him the physical reassurance that I know he's there."

5/ Relationship boundaries

At present Janets' loyalties appear to lie predominantly outside the relationship, whereas Brad's energies are divided between their relationship, family demands and his study:

Brad: "Janet can't talk much about what's going on with her work, it's confidential and I know that but I can feel the tension sometimes and I know she can't say anything about it so just a stroke or a cuddle or a touch or a squeeze is just to say I care or I understand you've got problems"

As mentioned above Brad finds it hard to ask Janet for the same attention:

Brad: "..if Janet's tired I just don't bother to ask her."

Janet: "But I'm always busy and I'm always tired."

6/ Separation of sexual and non-sexual touching

In the earlier years of their relationship Janet felt that for Brad any touch was part of a process to become sexual, Brad reluctantly confirms this:

Brad: "..I used to feel that there were times that I'd like to cuddle or touch without it being sexual but I thought that that was expected of me. And sometimes my body would react that way even if I didn't want to be that way, you know 'Go down you bastard.'"

For Brad an important part of the sexual contact was getting his touching needs met. In the past he had had sex sometimes simply in order to get his touching needs met. Learning to be aware of and ask for his needs to be met was an integral part of separating sexual and non-sexual touching. Discovering the pleasures of being sensual separate from being sexual has broadened Brad's focus somewhat:

Brad: "..I used to look at tits, twat, bottom-have a good time, you know, but lately, the last couple of years, I'm enjoying peoples' bodies. You know-"

Interviewer: "You mean the other bits, not necessarily the sexual parts?"

Brad: " Yeah, exactly. I mean I love giving Janet foot massages because it's, it's almost a sexual contact but without being sexual."

For both Brad and Janet part of separating sexual from non-sexual touch involves a clear statement of their intentions:

Brad: "As long as it's stated that way, that's the difference, I mean to say we've just learned possibly only last year to say 'I really want a cuddle but I don't want sex just now.'"

7/ Significance of non-sexual touching

Describing himself as a very physical person Brad has always enjoyed non-sexual touching with his male and female friends, feeling that when they can hug a barrier is broken down. To Brad in his relationship with Janet, touching means giving and receiving lots of things:

Brad: "... reinforcement I suppose, acknowledgement of my presence and acknowledgement of um of my love for Janet. You know even just walking past her and giving her shoulder as I go past just a stroke or just a touch, that's sort of like here I am, I know you're there... I care or I understand you've got problems... (Foot massage) is just a feeling of giving somebody pleasure, it's almost a release for me you know?"

With Janet expending a great deal of energy on her work outside the home she comes home to relax and recharge her batteries and non-sexual touch provides a way of doing that and maintaining contact with Brad:

Interviewer: "...how do you stay in touch?"

Janet: " Very often it's cuddling and just being close."

For both Janet and Brad touching helps to facilitate self disclosure, particularly asking for their needs to be met:

Brad: "You never get to that point (discussing a painful or difficult subject) unless intimacy has got to a level that you can actually touch on that point. Do you see what I'm meaning?"

Interviewer: "Yeah so intimacy is really stripping away all the protective layers."

Brad: "...a person can get between the layers and go deeper and deeper at any given time."

I: " And does touch facilitate moving between the layers for you at all?"

Brad: " Yeah, I suppose it does, it does sort of create pathways into it, doesn't it?"

At the final meeting Brad and Janet commented further on this:

Brad: "To share intimate thoughts I have to feel safe and by having touch this breaks down the area of whether someone is willing to listen...be open to me in the way I need them to."

Janet: " Touch is a question- am I going to be safe?"

8/ Values and belief systems

Despite this couple's choice to not go through a legal marriage ceremony and to live a somewhat alternative lifestyle they still seem to have similar goals and struggles as the other two couples in this study with intimate relationships.

9/ Male / Female differences

For the past two years Janet and Brad have reversed the traditional roles they had previously been following with Janet now working towards a career and being the main income earner and Brad the home based primary childraiser, beginning to study now in recognition of his need for qualifications.

As with some of the other couples taking part in this study, Brad sees the physical and the intellectual/emotional parts of intimacy as quite separate whereas for Janet they are a lot more connected.

Brad: " Oh yeah, one can lead onto the other but I do feel they're still separate."

Interviewer: " Are they like that for you Janet, separate?"

Janet: " The physical and the intellectual? Umm they're not quite as definitely different as Brad seems to feel um, no they're a lot more connected, I need to feel emotionally close to be able to cuddle um and to be able to share stuff that is risky for me."

10/ Change

Becoming ill with chemical poisoning several years ago exacerbated for Janet the emotional problems that she was dealing with internally. Seeking some counselling to face and deal with those problems was the beginning of a turning point for Janet and Brad. As Janet began training as a counsellor herself, she shared with Brad the skills she was learning and together they have made a lot of changes in their relationship, particularly in the way they communicate, as outlined in previous sections.

11/ Identity, confidence

In choosing to maintain an alternative lifestyle in the face of family opposition Janet and Brad could be said to be demonstrating a clear sense of identity, a knowledge of what is important to them and the confidence to seek those things. There is no sign of their choices being made for negative reasons, for example out of rebellion. Brad talked about his determination to reject his conditioning in the traditional male stereotype:

Brad: "Nowdays who I am inside is the way I'm going to act for life and if other people can't handle it that's just their stiff shit."

Though he's aware that this is something he still has to struggle with sometimes, Brad's understanding and valuing of himself are clear:

Brad: " I've got more inside me now, more worth I suppose, not to feel attacked."

12/ External Factors

Brad and Janet offered no information about the influence of any external factors on their relationship, other than those already discussed above.

In order to bring together the data collected from the Waring Intimacy Questionnaire and the narratives a checklist matrix has been produced incorporating questionnaire scores (WIQ), deviations from the mean (SD's) and quotations from the narrative for each of the components of intimacy as operationally defined by Waring. Some discrepancies between the two sources were evident so a further rating was sought and incorporated into the intimacy matrix. This provides some information on how important (HI) each component is to the participant and why, in contrast to the Waring Intimacy Questionnaire which focuses on rating the quality and quantity of the various aspects of intimacy.

Table 5 INTIMACY MATRIX - BRAD

<u>Intimacy Component</u>	<u>Example</u>	<u>WIQ</u>	<u>SD's</u>	<u>HI</u>	<u>Why Important</u>
<u>Conflict Resolution</u>	"We used to niggle .. now I don't take on board your anger anymore."	10	+0.9	10	"Otherwise something that should be minor becomes large."
<u>Affection</u>	"I love giving Janet foot massages, its a feeling of giving somebody pleasure."	4	-1.8	10	"Then Janet knows how I feel about her."
<u>Cohesion</u>	"Our commitment is like a safety net for risks."	6	-0.7	10	"Risks in a cohesive relationship aren't so threatening.."
<u>Sexuality</u>	"I've found it difficult to ask for my needs to be met."	8	+0.6	10	"Communicating my needs means... I might get just what I want"
<u>Identity</u>	"Nowdays who I am inside is the way I'm going to act for life..."	5	-1.3	10	"If people each have their own contributions to make then its a catalyst for the relationship."
<u>Compatibility</u>	"We may have different opinions but we're prepared to discuss them and be open."	5	-1.2	10	"Otherwise we'd be fighting the whole time."
<u>Autonomy</u>	"My parents gave me a start but now I'm an individual, my kids are important to me."	4	-1.6	10	"If family interfered it could be destructive."
<u>Expressiveness</u>	"We can actually say what we want now."	9	+0.7	10	"Expressiveness stops us playing a guessing game"
<u>Total Intimacy</u>		28	+0.6		
<u>Social Desirability</u>		0	-1.5		

Table 6 INTIMACY MATRIX - JANET

<u>Intimacy Components</u>	<u>Example</u>	<u>WIO</u>	<u>SD's</u>	<u>HI</u>	<u>Why Important</u>
<u>Conflict Resolution</u>	"I had to change the way I listened and spoke..."	8	+0.1	10	"Without resolving conflict unfinished business stays there."
<u>Affection</u>	"I have difficulty remembering that Brad needs as much if not more than I do."	3	-2.6	10	""Affection is like a positive reinforcer, without knowing I'm cared for I wouldn't stick around"
<u>Cohesion</u>	"If there was no commitment I would feel less safe to risk."	4	-1.7	10	"Our relationship wouldn't grow without risk."
<u>Sexuality</u>	"Sex is the most intimate form of showing affection."	7	-0.3	10	"The expression and experiencing of intimacy."
<u>Identity</u>	"I have my own agenda that I'm quite clear on."	7	0	10	"Who would feed the relationship if people didn't have their own identity."
<u>Compatibility</u>	"In most things we find it resonably easy to agree."	6	-0.6	10	"Otherwise we'd use too much energy ."
<u>Autonomy</u>	"I have grown, I no longer depend on my family."	5	-1.7	10	"Respect for individual differences is important."
<u>Expressiveness</u>	We do "a lot less blaming than we used to."	7	-0.9	10	"Sharing feelings is the bread and butter of a relationship."
<u>Total Intimacy</u>		26	+0.2		
<u>Social Desirability</u>		0	-1.5		

Carol and Julian

Julian and Carol are both tertiary qualified secondary school teachers by profession. At present Carol's main focus is on child raising though she relief teaches. They have been married for seventeen years and have three children.

Intimacy Components

1/ Verbal communication

Carol and Julian are intelligent articulate people who seem to enjoy talking together. At times of conflict however they tend to talk less:

Interviewer: "So at times when you were in despair did you actually talk about your feelings to each other. Is that something you do? Much?"

Julian: " Carol probably does it better than I do because I tend to go quiet, I think, don't I?"

Carol: "Yes and I do sometimes."

Julian: "And I withdraw."

Both are aware that expressing feelings to each other can be a useful way of resolving conflict and do self disclose occasionally, especially Carol. Carol also uses humour a lot in her communications. Julian, coming from a more serious background, has had some difficulties adjusting to this.

At the final meeting Carol and Julian informed the researcher that they had just attended a Marriage Enrichment course and learned that they particularly needed to work on improving their expression of feelings to each other.

2/ Doing things together

The shared interests most apparent for this couple are church and family activities. As both Julian and Carol lead very full lives they struggle sometimes to arrange time together just for the two of them, though this is a stated goal for both of them:

Julian: "We've been looking actually for several years now to find a weekend when we can go away together..no that's not quite true.. we went away at Queen's Birthday weekend.."

3/ Supporting each other, loyalty, friendship, mutual respect

Through having in common the same level of education, profession, and religious beliefs, Carol and Julian developed a close friendship after their initial mutual attraction to each other. They also seem to have developed over the years a genuine acceptance of each other's differences:

Carol: "In actual fact we had lots of things that were quite different but ..that can be fun rather than a hindrance."

When they had their first child Carol devoted herself to full time childcare and Julian remained in full time employment, however for the hours that he was at home Julian seems to have played a considerable role in childcare and housework. This has lessened as the children have got older and his work demands greater:

Julian: "I can remember with our first child that I cooked a lot more meals than I ever cooked before or since because Sam always needed a feed between five and six... and later... Karen would cry in the night and Carol wouldn't even wake and I'd go and change Karen, put a new nappy on, bring her to Carol, she'd feed her in bed while she was still almost asleep, I'd take Karen back to bed and put her in her cot again and Carol would hardly have woken up."

Both interrupt each other in conversation though this seemed to be a result of being keen to express their point of view rather than an attempt to put the other down. In fact Carol and Julian appear to have a great deal of respect for each other, being clear on both the other's and their own areas of competence and valuing these:

Julian: Yes, there are numbers of areas like that... at the personal level where Carol has got skills and abilities which ah, which I haven't."

See section 9 for further examples of this.

4/ Negotiation, co-ordinating with partner, achieving balance, handling conflict, decision making, acceptance of difficulties

As mentioned in section 1, conflict often leads to expression by Carol and withdrawal by Julian:

Carol: " Mmm, I often see Julian looking at me when I know I've been a bit sort of you know, urhh, urhh, and I can see him saying I think we'll just skirt around this one for a while and leave her in peace until she recovers her composure which I usually do, don't I? "

Julian: " Yes, yes we don't tend to shout at each other... In fact we go terse... Terse is the word Carol uses. As far as I'm concerned I become monosyllabic."

Carol: "But I tell you that sometimes don't I?"

Conflict does seem to be resolved however as neither find themselves bringing up old issues; thinking things through later and having a hug seem to be factors here. Julian and Carol co-ordinate closely with one another to ensure both have the opportunity to follow their interests and meet their commitments. The two had a somewhat different opinion of how some decisions are made in their relationship:

Julian: " Well it would depend on the decision, by consensus usually although there are some areas where I recognize Carol's particular interest and will quite cheerfully go along with her decision and that's usually for example things around home, if it comes to a decision."

Carol: " Like? "

Julian: " Well most of the furnishings and furniture and those sorts of things."

Carol: " OOOHHH RUBBISH !! (laughs,smacks Julian's leg.)

Carol and Julian concluded this discussion some time later with:

Carol: "Yeah, we both, we both, yes we both have input. I don't think one dominates to any great extent."

Julian: " No, no. No need to."

Carol: " No desire to really."

5/ Relationship boundaries

As Julian has a senior position, demands of his job can impinge on family responsibilities:

Julian: " ..if it was a survey and you listed your priorities and you'd say yes, you know, family came before work; in practical terms you tend to sort of come to some compromise."

Both Carol and Julian find this acceptable as these demands have increased as their children have got older with the accompanying reduction or at least change in demands. For Carol, family demands are put before work demands at present. Though they seldom make time for the two of them to socialize together, Carol and Julian generally have a catch up time before dinner each evening.

Both partners are in touch with their families of origin but these people do not seem to play a large role in either Carol's or Julian's lives.

6/ Separation of sexual and non-sexual touching

Carol and Julian often let circumstances decide for them whether their touching is sexual or non-sexual:

Carol: "..I usually get up a bit after him because it takes him a bit longer to wake up in the morning and um I might meet him in the passage but I've got to have my morning cuddle and I mean that's fairly clear and ...I don't know. I suppose there are times when still it's not absolutely clear and sometimes one person might think it's one thing-"

Julian: " Yes, yes."

Carol: " -and one person still might think it's another."

Interviewer: "So what do you do then, how do you clarify it?"

Julian: "We wait and see what develops."

Neither seem to feel unduly pressured to carry on and have sex, talking about respecting the other's wishes 99% of the time and for the other 1% being willing to be persuaded.

When asked at the final meeting to comment further on the separation of sexual and non-sexual touching both expressed surprise at the number of couples at their marriage enrichment weekend who were experiencing problems in this area. Neither Carol nor Julian can remember it ever being an issue or problem for them but offered a suggestion of why this may not have been necessary:

Carol: "Julian has always been very considerate of my feelings. If I didn't want sex he would always respect my wish."

Julian: "Yes, yes I could say the same of Carol. Also for me to touch affectionately was a reaction against what my parents did, I think I talked about that last time, so that was kind of an added reinforcement."

7/ Significance of non-sexual touching

Non-sexual touching is very important to both Carol and Julian and something they engage in frequently. The hugs, handholding and other touches that both initiate seldom occurred in their families of origin. It has a variety of significances to them:

Carol: " Yes I suppose there's affection, there's probably to a certain degree too that, a feeling of almost security?"

Julian: " Mmm hmm."

Carol: "You know, within the relationship? Umm..yeah. It just feels good, doesn't it? Well I think it does."

Julian: "Yes"

Carol: "I'm just trying to think, you know, how else to explain it, I'm not sure really..... Actually sometimes, oh a sense of sort of, I suppose it comes from all that you share really, it's a sense of kind of sharing and it depends on the context of it um, it might be, particularly I'm thinking of when the children were young, sometimes to have a good cuddle-"

Julian: " Without them squeezing inbetween."

Carol: " Yes or even when they were smaller than that and not able to do that, even a sense of kind of sharing the frustration or whatever.. You and me against the world."

Julian particularly is aware that in holding hands with Carol or his children he is giving them and getting for himself what he missed out on from his father. Though hugging and kissing can be part of reconciling after a disagreement, neither are aware of non-sexual touching particularly changing the way they relate. but feel the opposite applies:

Carol: "I would say that if we haven't been doing much (non sexual touching) it's probably a sign that one's feeling out of sorts with the other."

Both Julian and Carol believe that non-sexual touching is one of the things that fosters their relationship, including their sexual relationship though this does not seem to be something they had particularly focused on prior to discussion:

Interviewer: " ..if you weren't getting non-sexual touching during the day I wonder whether you might think, you might withdraw from sex or you might be less interested?"

Carol: " I think that probably is possible isn't it?"

Julian: " Yes."

Carol: I've probably said that to you occasionally, haven't I, actually."

Julian: "Oh, yes, yes."

Interviewer: "It's certainly been my experience with a lot of the couples that I work with that that's one of the areas where things have broken down. There hasn't been that sort of affectionate touching."

Carol: "Right, yes.. I think it is important to me."

Interviewer: " What about for you Julian, would that make any difference to you?"

Julian: " Yes and no. Um, it would vary depending on the circumstances I would imagine but certainly um non sexual touching during the day and so on will make one more receptive later on although I don't-"

Carol: " It's part of the overall relationship I think as much as anything, um the fostering of that."

Julian: "Yes."

At the final meeting Carol added the following comment:

Carol: "If you feel cared for then no matter whether the other person disagrees strongly with what you're saying, you won't feel threatened. For me non-sexual touching is part of the caring process."

Finally both Julian and Carol feel that for the children to see them hugging and touching in other ways gives them a good model of what relationships need and perhaps a reassuring feeling of security.

8/ Value and belief systems including emphasis put on the quality of the relationship.

Carol and Julian appear not to have made their relationship a high priority issue to focus on, perhaps not least because they largely share the same views on how they want their relationship to be. They also share religious views which are important to both:

Julian: "The common values and ideas that we have in terms of our own personal beliefs, that gives us a base for our relationship to build on...The fact that we have religious views in common is one of the things which brought us together in the first place and it's one of the things which has been a constant factor right through."

Carol: "Yes, that's one of the glues.."

9/ Male/ female differences

With the exception of Carol's choice to be the full time child raiser this couple did not appear to fit into the traditional stereotyped gender role divisions.

10/ Change

The only way in which the topic of change appears in Carol and Julian's story is that by putting an emphasis on non-sexual touching they have chosen to be different from their parents.

11/ Identity, confidence

Carol impressed as an individual with good self esteem and a clear sense of her own strengths, value and rights. Julian appears to have lots of confidence in himself professionally; perhaps less personally:

Carol: "The knowledge that you're reasonably.. complete people on your own, well speaking for myself... (I've) been a complete person and ..sort of sorted (my) life out and a career and things like that so you assume some sort of competence in that area and.. a certain amount of self worth I think."

Julian: " ..yes, certainly (I do know I have good skills and knowledge) professionally, I would probably find the personal ones harder because I probably lack them."

12/ External Factors

This couple offered no information on external factors affecting their lives.

In order to bring together the data collected from the Waring Intimacy Questionnaire and the narratives a checklist has been produced incorporating questionnaire scores (WIQ), deviations from the mean (SD's) and quotations from the narrative for each of the components of intimacy as operationally defined by Waring. Some discrepancies between the two sources were evident so a further rating was sought and incorporated into the intimacy matrix. This provides some information on how important (HI) each component is to the participant and why, in contrast to the Waring Intimacy Questionnaire which focuses on rating the quality and quantity of the various aspects of intimacy.

Table 7 INTIMACY MATRIX - CAROL

<u>Intimacy Components</u>	<u>Example</u>	<u>WIQ</u>	<u>SD's</u>	<u>HI</u>	<u>Why Important</u>
<u>Conflict Resolution</u>	"It's something we haven't been particularly good at but we're working on it."	9	+0.5	7	"I like to have things settled."
<u>Affection</u>	"You know I really like that (affectionate hugs etc.)"	7	-0.4	10	"It adds to the feeling of security of your relationship."
<u>Cohesion</u>	"I feel as if I'm 100% committed."	5	-1.2	10	"So that at times when you're feeling a bit down to it that knowledge of commitment eases you through."
<u>Sexuality</u>	"Sex on it's own wouldn't be enough to make a good relationship."	7	-0.3	9	"I wouldn't want to be without it, it adds an extra dimension."
<u>Identity</u>	I'm "a reasonably complete person."	9	+0.9	9	"I wouldn't want either of us to drag the other."
<u>Compatibility</u>	"..we had lots of things .. different but that can be fun.."	6	-0.6	7	"It's important to be able to do things together."
<u>Autonomy</u>	"I enjoy but don't need my parent's company."	6	-1.1	5	"Realistically my children need me at present."
<u>Expressiveness</u>	"So that's what we really had to talk about, what the intention was.."	9	+0.3	8	"The more you understand where the other is coming from the more you feel at one with them."
<u>Total Intimacy</u>		28	+0.6		
<u>Social Desirability</u>		4	-0.3		

Table 8 INTIMACY MATRIX - JULIAN

<u>Intimacy Components</u>	<u>Example</u>	<u>WIQ</u>	<u>SD's</u>	<u>HI</u>	<u>Why Important</u>
<u>Conflict Resolution</u>	"We don't tend to shout at each other, we go terse."	10	+0.9	8	"If you don't resolve arguments they can grow."
<u>Affection</u>	"When Carol comes and does that (hugs) to me it has that special sort of meaning."	10	+1.1	9	"(Affection is)the whole basis of everything."
<u>Cohesion</u>	"That's what marriage is about, being committed to another person."	9	+0.8	10	"It offers assurance that both are willing to work at the relationship."
<u>Sexuality</u>	"..part of marriage which is important."	3	-1.9	9	"Your sexual relationship helps make marriage worthwhile."
<u>Identity</u>	I have "skills and interests.. professionally.."	9	+0.5	9	"Recognizing the other has gifts and skills can help to build them up."
<u>Compatibility</u>	"I definitely knew I wanted a person who was independent and competent and tall." (Carol is all those things)	10	+1.2	8	"There will always be areas we don't have to agree on."
<u>Autonomy</u>	"I think it's more important to be independent from my family of origin than my children."	10	+1.0	8	"So I can do things for myself."
<u>Expressiveness</u>	"I tend to go quiet I think, don't I?"	5	-1.1	9	"It helps you to sort out your own feelings to share them with someone else."
<u>Total Intimacy</u>		21	-1.0		
<u>Social Desirability</u>		10	+1.5		

Jan and Fred

Jan and Fred have been married for five years and have two preschool children. Fred, aged 35, works as a traindriver. Jan, 27, is a full time mother and housewife. Neither have any secondary or tertiary qualifications. Both experienced some difficulties completing the Waring Intimacy Questionnaire, primarily in understanding the questions.

Intimacy Components

1/ Verbal Communication

Talking together is not something that Jan and Fred appear to spend much time doing; when they do it is often not satisfactory for either of them:

Fred: " No, I think about it a lot but I don't really discuss it."

and again:

Fred: " Yeah but sometimes I say things and Jan takes me the wrong way."

As will be discussed further in section 4 Jan does not often offer her opinion in order to avoid a fight:

Interviewer: " What stops you from doing it (expressing feelings), do you think?"

Jan: "Probably the result of what happens if you do say how you feel."

Interviewer: "Which is what?"

Jan: "Anger."

Interviewer: "From both of you?"

Jan: " Um, no, I don't think it was from both. Just on Fred's side. I'd be scared the result would be we'd end up having a fight. I've had enough of being hit so I tread carefully."

This is frustrating for Fred who claims he wants to know her opinion:

Jan: " I'd like him to make decisions but I'd like him to see my side of it."

Fred: "I do."

Jan: "Not really. I don't really say what I really think."

Fred: "Well I'd like you to. How am I supposed to know?"

Jan: (giggling) "You don't."

This may offer an illustration of the vicious cycle of miscommunication that can occur when both partners do not feel safe to express themselves. Jan sees the humorous side of many things, Fred appears to have little sense of humour so this is not a meeting area for this couple and is sometimes a source of conflict when Fred feels like he is being laughed at by Jan.

2/ Doing things together

Jan and Fred seldom spend time with just the two of them doing things together; with two small children this would take some organising but it does not appear to be a high priority:

Fred: "Yeah I think about it then I get thinking about things I want to do so I suppose we haven't had any lately."

Interviewer: "What sort of things are they likely to be? Jobs around the home or..?"

Jan: "His fish tank." (Fred is building a frame in which to display his fish tank.)

Similarly, arranging to spend time talking together is difficult. Though the children are both in bed by 7.30pm television appears to play an important role:

Fred: "...Jan will never sit down and talk."

Jan: "It's late at night, I'm tired."

Interviewer: "So late at night isn't a good time for you to be sitting down and talking."

Jan: "No."

Fred: "Well teatime it isn't and there's no other time."

It could be argued that their stage of marriage, particularly having two young children, makes spending time together difficult. However when asked if they would like to spend more time with just the two of them doing things together:

Fred: "Yes, we could go on hikes, go fishing.."

Jan: " I hate fishing and I'd rather do things that include the kids anyway."

3/ Supporting each other, loyalty, friendship, mutual respect.

Jan clearly plays a supportive role to Fred; she makes him milo every evening, bakes his favourite cakes for him, had filled out the back of the WIQ for him and encouraged him to complete it, and:

Jan: "I've actually said to him you know, 'I'll give you a hug.' and he's said 'What for?' and I've said ' 'Cause you look as if you need one.' and then I'll just give him one."

Fred appears to see his income earning and his superior decision making capabilities as his mode of support to Jan. Though Jan at times attests to Fred's role as the decision maker it is difficult to judge whether either Jan or Fred really respect the other. They do not appear to be particularly good friends. Jan discusses matters of importance to her, much more with her women friends or family than with Fred. Fred, a fairly solitary individual, does not share himself with anyone. When asked what was important to her to make an intimate relationship, that we hadn't covered, Jan suggested understanding. For someone who has learned not to express her point of view, the chances of her getting this are surely slim.

Interviewer: "What do you mean by understanding?"

Jan: "When Fred knows where I'm at and I know he's listened and heard my point of view."

Interviewer: "What does understanding mean to you Fred?"

Fred: "It means that I've got through, I've got my point across, really pleased."

Both talk in terms of understanding being something they would like to receive rather than something they could also offer.

4/ Negotiation, co-ordinating with the other, achieving balance.

Several factors appear to govern negotiation in this relationship:

- a) Both believe Fred has the ultimate right to make decisions.
- b) As already mentioned Jan has learned that she will either be put down or her contribution to a discussion will lead to a fight so she now seldom expresses her point of view.
- c) Though Fred and Jan have been taught the basic skills of negotiating by a counsellor they seem unable or unwilling to grasp or remember or put them into practice.

Jan: "Oh quite often Fred will already have his mind made up before we discuss something anyway so I just go ahead with it and don't do my opinion 'cause his mind's already made up. Well it comes across as if his mind is made up."

Fred: " 'Cause that's probably I thought about it beforehand."

I: "So what would happen if you disagreed?"

Jan: "Oh probably have an argument."

As a result conflict often remains unresolved; Fred seems convinced that there would be no conflict if only Jan was sensible enough to see things his way:

Interviewer: "My next question was how you resolve those differences of opinion..."

Jan: "No I don't think, oh sometimes we do but probably the majority of time it probably goes unleft. Doesn't it? Although we're learning."

Fred: "No I think Jan probably doesn't give enough, enough ah input or something."

I: "Input to?"

Fred: "Thinking and ...thinking out things."

5/ Relationship boundaries

Both are clear on where the balance of their loyalties lie:

Interviewer: "Okay, so what would most of your time be spent on Jan?"

Jan: "Kids and thinking about meals, what to cook. Ninety percent of the time is cooking in the kitchen."

Interviewer: " Mmm, what about you Fred?"

Fred: " Most of my time's spent at work, but you mean at home?"

Interviewer: "No, no, altogether."

Fred: " Well, it'd be work; in order probably at work, then things around home, then probably with Grace (3 year old)."

Jan: (Laughing) "Where do I fit in?"

Fred: "After that. That'd be next."

6/ Separation of sexual and non-sexual touching.

Though Jan and Fred initially reported having no difficulties telling the difference between these two forms of physical contact this has not been something they have negotiated. Rather, the separation seems to occur through Jan's intuition:

Jan: "Like um well Fred has like a sexual sort of cuddle and just a normal cuddle. It's sort of, I suppose the cuddle's sort of more prolonged and there's a different sort of feeling around the cuddle. Well that's how I sort of see it, is that right? "

Both report getting less non-sexual contact than they would like. They are also both dissatisfied with their sexual relationship; Fred suffers from premature ejaculation which concerns him while he is having sex but not at other times. For Jan this is an ongoing source of frustration and perhaps one of the causes of her passive aggression as illustrated in the next excerpt. Jan chooses not to refuse sex when Fred initiates it; both say they sometimes feel pressured to have sex by the other but while Jan gives in Fred usually lets Jan know how tired he is rather than having sex when it does not suit him.

Interviewer: "What would you do Fred, if Jan said no sometimes?"

Fred: "I'd just accept it. But I'd feel like mud, worthless."

Jan: (giggling) "Then I'd think 'good job'."

When Jan talks about Fred's tendency to want to have sex after being violent Fred gives an indication that he perhaps is not clear on the difference between sexual and non-sexual touching and how each can meet different needs for him:

Interviewer: "What makes you want to have sex after a fight Fred"

Fred: "Oh just making up."

Interviewer: "I'm interested to know if you're really turned on or if you just want maybe to be cuddled or sort of comforted somehow so Jan can let you know it's okay, she still loves you, or maybe you want to show her that by having sex?"

Fred: "Yeah."

Interviewer: "Yeah which one?"

Fred: "Oh comforting I think, Jan and me."

On attempting to clarify at the final meeting whether Jan and Fred really have differentiated between sexual and non-sexual contact it became clear that the latter was not a meaningful concept for Fred, or at least one about which he has some confusion:

Interviewer: "What does non-sexual touching mean to you?"

Jan: "Where you don't end up going to bed."

Fred: "Non-sexual touching must be not touching, just looking. If you touch then it's sexual. A chemical reaction that's always there with a man and a woman."

Interviewer: "But last time we met you talked about liking to have a hug sometimes, isn't that separate from sex?"

Fred: "Well yes, but it's easier to ask for sex than a hug."

Interviewer: "What makes it easier?"

Jan: "'Cause I don't say no to sex."

Fred: "Yeah."

Interviewer: "And do you sometimes say no to a hug?"

Jan: "No, he never asks."

Fred: "She might though, if she's shitty at me."

7/ Significance of non sexual touching

Both Jan and Fred cuddle their children, Jan frequently cuddling both the three year old and the baby, Fred more the older child. Neither remember getting cuddles from their parents and Jan especially values this kind of contact though they seldom give it to each other. In contrast to Fred, Jan seems to enjoy hugs for fun:

Interviewer: "Yeah, so what stops you?" (asking for hugs)

Jan: " Um, sometimes the mood Fred's in, if I just want to do it for fun he'll say 'Whaddaya want?' Um yeah, just basically his attitude."

Fred's difficulties with communication also contribute to his missing out on some non-sexual touching which he seems to appreciate though neither articulated what it was about it that they liked:

Interviewer: "Would you like to do more touching Fred?"

Fred: " Yeah, but sometimes I say things and Jan takes me the wrong way. Like yesterday I was going to a meeting. I realised, I was aware of the time and I was going to walk around and I says to Jan, I've gotta go and she took it as if I didn't want anything to do with her, I've gotta rush off but I sort of had to keep my mind aware of you know time's rushing on. You know I wouldn't have minded having a cuddle but I couldn't sit round and talk."

8/ Value / belief systems

A strong belief shared by Jan and Fred is that Fred's rightful place is as head of the household, the one to be cared for and to make decisions. This consensus on their roles may in itself be a bond for Jan and Fred's relationship.

9/ Male / female differences

Jan and Fred have very traditional role divisions as described above including Jan's belief that she shouldn't say no to Paul's requests for sex because he 'needs' it.

10/ Change

The theme of change did not feature in this couple's story.

11/ Identity

Jan is often giggly and admits to both a lack of logic and being impulsive:

Jan: "I don't really like making decisions anyway."

Interviewer: "Why?"

Jan: "Nine times out of ten they're wrong! (laughs) And Fred, I mean, most of the time he does think them through where I just mostly go off the top of my head. Then I think oh blast I should have done it his way."

A common consequence for women in violent relationships is low self-esteem. It is not possible to determine from this study whether Jan had more confidence in her own decisions before entering into a relationship with Fred, or whether this has always been a shortcoming of hers.

Fred's overall demeanour and his dominant and violent behaviour gives the impression of severe lack of confidence.

12/ External factors

Shift work appears to create some strain for Jan and Fred:

Interviewer: "How does the tiredness affect your relationship, do you think? Does it make you grumpy? I see you nodding Jan."

Fred: " Ohh, I guess ah, probably short tempered but um I'm not sure, I guess so. I think I've lived with it for so long, fourteen years, I just don't know."

In order to bring together the data collected from the Waring Intimacy Questionnaire and the narratives a checklist matrix has been produced incorporating questionnaire scores (WIQ), deviations from the mean (SD's) and quotations from the narrative for each of the components of intimacy as operationally defined by Waring. Some discrepancies between the two sources were evident so a further rating was sought and incorporated into the intimacy matrix. This provides some information on how important (HI) each component is to the participant and why, in contrast to the Waring Intimacy Questionnaire which focuses on rating the quality and quantity of the various aspects of intimacy.

Table 9 INTIMACY MATRIX - JAN

<u>Intimacy Components</u>	<u>Example</u>	<u>WIQ</u>	<u>SD's</u>	<u>HI</u>	<u>Why Important</u>
<u>Conflict Resolution</u>	"Sometimes we do but probably the majority of time it goes unleft."	3	-2.0	7	" If we don't fix a problem it will build up and explode."
<u>Affection</u>	"I've said to him 'You look as if you need a hug' and he's said 'What for?'"	5	-1.5	10	'Cause then you know that someone loves you for what you are."
<u>Cohesion</u>	"I feel I've made a commitment and I want to work at it."	6	-0.7	10	"I don't want to become another statistic on the divorce list."
<u>Sexuality</u>	"Sex isn't the most important thing in marriage."	3	-1.8	4	"My needs don't really get met at all."
<u>Identity</u>	"Sometimes I feel quite good about myself."	8	+0.5	7	"Maybe if I'm feeling good I can make Fred feel better."
<u>Compatibility</u>	"If I just want to have fun he'll say 'Whaddaya want?' "	4	-1.5	7	"If we could have fun it would take the tension out for one thing."
<u>Autonomy</u>	Life focused around "Kids, thinking about what to cook."	9	+0.7	5	"It's good being away from my family now because they had too much input."
<u>Expressiveness</u>	"Fred finds it hard to take if I've got a problem, I don't think he understands."	4	-2.6	8	"If you don't express yourself then the other person doesn't know what you're feeling."
<u>Total Intimacy</u>	"I think we've got a long way to go."	21	-1.0	9	"Then the other person gets to understand you."
<u>Social Desirability</u>		0	-1.5		

Table 10 INTIMACY MATRIX - FRED

<u>Intimacy Components</u>	<u>Example</u>	<u>WIO</u>	<u>SD's</u>	<u>HI</u>	<u>Why Important</u>
<u>Conflict Resolution</u>	"I try to (negotiate) but often Jan doesn't have a lot to say."	1	-2.6	10	"If we don't we either go into a fight or feel rejected."
<u>Affection</u>	"There are other things more important."	5	-1.3	5	"I suppose we get to know each other that way."
<u>Cohesion</u>	"It's important because I don't want to fail."	8	+0.3	9	"I wouldn't want anybody else to think they could divorce because I have."
<u>Sexuality</u>	"I never had sexual problems before we got married."	3	-1.9	8	"It's important for Jan to know my desires and frustrations."
<u>Identity</u>	"No, I don't feel very good about myself."	2	-2.7	6	"I don't see how feeling better about myself would change my relationship."
<u>Compatibility</u>	Divides his time between work, home maintenance and kids, time with Jan comes "after that"	5	-1.7	4	"You don't get much things done if you play around."
<u>Autonomy</u>	"I visit my parents once a year."	5	-1.2	3	"All what I know comes from my mother and father."
<u>Expressiveness</u>	"You can get by without bringing things up that aren't really necessary."	4	-1.6	4	"It's hard to find time, but if we don't then I don't know how Jan feels."
<u>Total Intimacy</u>	"I'd like Jan to understand how I'm feeling."	13	-2.7		
<u>Social Desirability</u>		0	-1.5		

Chapter Five

RESULTS

In the present study into the nature of intimacy, the five couples' stories presented in the preceeding chapter are in fact the results. Each couple has presented their own understanding of intimacy in their relationship. However in this section the main points of the stories will be extrapolated and presented from the varying perspectives of the models outlined in the Introduction. As Clark and Reis (1988) discovered from their review of intimacy research, the emergent picture depends very much on the perspective chosen. In order to minimise any limitations on the understandings gained into the nature of intimacy, this chapter comprises a report of:

- 1/ The Waring Intimacy Questionnaire data and its correlation with the narrative impressions.
- 2/ Information on the balances and imbalances evident from the perspective of the Roughton and Jenkins (1990) model.
- 3/ Data on the phase each relationship is in based on the Roughton and Jenkins (1990) systemic model and the Paul and White (1990) model of relationship maturity.
- 4/ The important processes and principles of intimacy apparent from bringing together the couples' stories and making a comparison of the intimate relationships with those experienced and assessed as being lacking in intimacy.

This study does not attempt to be an exhaustive interpretation of the collaborators' stories; other facets have emerged that could have been developed. Similarly, other interpretations could well be made of the data presented. The emphasis throughout has been on accepting the couples' own understandings of intimacy in their relationship and remaining true to this. A discussion of validity issues in this study is incorporated.

1/ The Waring Intimacy Questionnaire

As detailed in Appendix B, section four; Waring, Patton, Neron and Linker (1986) have operationally defined four types of intimacy (Optimal, pseudo, average and deficient or absent) based on the total intimacy score, subscale profile and social desirability scores gained from the Waring Intimacy Questionnaire.

Two couples; Ian and Elizabeth, and Brad and Janet rated as having an average level of intimacy. Although total scores for both couples were high enough to rate as optimal intimacy, neither couple showed an adequate level of consistency in their subscale profiles for this rating. Two other couples rated as clearly deficient in intimacy: Jan and Fred, and Mac and Jean. For all four couples these quantitative results were in accordance with their stories.

Carol and Julian presented themselves as enjoying an average level of intimacy; they decided during the study that they wanted to learn to express their feelings more, however reported being content with the level of intimacy in their relationship on the whole. This matched with the impression the researcher gained in her meetings with this couple. Carol's quantitative rating of the relationship confirms an average level of intimacy.

Julian's results proved less simple to understand. Julian showed a very high total intimacy score but an extremely high social desirability score suggestive of pseudo intimacy. Incongruously he gave the sexuality component of his relationship a low score in the questionnaire. At the final meeting he commented that he did not feel the low sexuality score accurately reflected his experience. As there is a contradiction between the narrative and the questionnaire data in both these areas, with one score being higher than appropriate and the other lower, it does not seem accurate to conclude that Julian answered his questionnaire solely from a concern of presenting a desirable picture. Further reinforcement of this is provided by his low expressiveness score which matches the narrative impression and shows that Julian is willing to honestly and accurately present himself in this area at least.

At the beginning of the first interview Julian appeared quite uncomfortable; his subsequent disclosure of his discomfort in revealing himself to people he did not know very well along with Carol's high intimacy rating and low social

desirability score were thought sufficient to accept this couple's claims that they experienced their relationship as adequately intimate. In retrospect it may have been useful to have readministered the Waring Intimacy Questionnaire at the conclusion of the interviews or to have had a single administration later in the process. The decision to present the questionnaire before indepth discussion in order to avoid confounding individual's ratings of their relationship with their interpretation of their partner's ratings and the interviewer's interests, may have been made at the cost of sufficient rapport and respondent comfort.

Couples varied in their degree of acceptance of the picture presented by the Waring data. Ian and Elizabeth, Jean and Mac, and Jan and Fred all thought the data offered a fairly accurate illustration of the aspects of their relationship covered, whereas the remaining two couples disagreed on some aspects. The source of Julian's dissension has already been discussed. Carol expressed surprise that her rating of the cohesion in their relationship was not higher. Brad and Janet expressed dissatisfaction at their scores in the affection, cohesion and autonomy subscales, all of which were lower than they felt appropriate. This latter couple criticised the questionnaire for the number of items containing absolutes; neither felt able to honestly agree to any such item. The focus on marriage was also seen to be inappropriate by Brad and Janet who live in a committed defacto relationship. None of the ten respondents complained about any rating being higher than appropriate.

Further criticisms of some specific items in the questionnaire and other general criticisms of the Waring Intimacy Questionnaire are outlined in Appendix B, section 3. It is impossible to judge to what extent these weaknesses may account for some of the discrepancies for Carol and Julian, and Brad and Janet, however as both couples still rate as having an average level of intimacy this was not seen as necessary. The value and implications of the data gathered from this measure are discussed in the next chapter.

2/ Balances and Imbalances

Bringing together the profiles from the Waring Intimacy Questionnaire for each couple clearly illustrates some areas of imbalance in the components of each relationship. A table containing the scores from the questionnaire and the rating scale for each couple is presented below and will be accompanied by a report of the results from the perspective of the Roughan and Jenkins (1990) model which focuses on balances and imbalances in each of three dimensions of a relationship; power, boundary and intimacy. As will be apparent the results from the two different perspectives yield somewhat different views of each relationship.

Table 11
Waring Intimacy Questionnaire Scores (WIQ) and Importance Ratings (IR)
for Elizabeth (Eliz) and Ian.

<u>Intimacy</u> <u>Components</u>	<u>Eliz WIQ</u>	<u>Ian WIQ</u>	<u>Eliz IR</u>	<u>Ian IR</u>
Conflict Resolution	9	8	9	7
Affection	9	8	6	8
Cohesion	7	7	9	10
Sexuality	4	9	5	9
Identity	8	7	5	8
Compatibility	4	6	4	6
Autonomy	10	10	7	5
Expressiveness	7	6	9	6
Total Intimacy (-social desirability score)	30	29		

Though there has been an imbalance in earlier years in two dimensions: boundaries and loyalties, and status and hierarchy, this couple have now negotiated their way to a balance in both of these dimensions. An imbalance in the intimacy dimension remains, with Ian particularly valuing sexual intimacy and placing a lower rating on verbal expressiveness than Elizabeth who prefers non-sexual intimacy and is unaware of any sexual needs of her own. This imbalance is evident in the narrative and reinforced in Table 11. The WIQ scores also show a considerable degree of balance in the ratings of all of the components of the relationship other than sexuality.

Table 12
Waring Intimacy Questionnaire Scores (WIQ) and Importance Ratings (IR)
for Mac and Jean (Jea).

<u>Intimacy Components</u>	<u>Mac WIQ</u>	<u>Jea WIQ</u>	<u>Mac IR</u>	<u>Jea IR</u>
Conflict Resolution	0	0	10	8
Affection	4	1	9	7
Cohesion	7	6	6	7
Sexuality	2	2	7	5
Identity	7	6	8	8
Compatibility	2	1	7	7
Autonomy	7	4	4	4
Expressiveness	3	3	6	2
Total Intimacy (-social des. score)	15	9		

This couple demonstrate an imbalance in all three dimensions:

1/ Hierarchy-status: the narrative suggests a symmetrical relationship in which both compete for power and status. Each tries to convince the other that their view is right and each keeps a "cash register of accounts" (Roughan and Jenkins, 1990). The only indication of this competition from the Waring Intimacy Questionnaire data shown in Table 12 are the low conflict resolution scores combined with the high ratings of the importance of this component of intimacy. Although Waring (1984) acknowledges the importance of the power dimension and its interrelatedness with intimacy the subscale profile does not give any clear information on functioning in this dimension.

2/ Loyalty-boundary: Jean is family oriented and resents Mac's lack of participation in this area. Until retirement Mac has been work oriented and resents Jean's lack of interest and valuing in this area. As in the power dimension, this information comes from the narrative viewed from the perspective of the Roughan and Jenkins model, rather than from the questionnaire data, though Jean's lower autonomy score could be related to this imbalance.

3/ Intimacy: Jean wanted affection, caring and love expressed in non-sexual ways, Mac expressed these sexually. Once again this imbalance was not apparent from the WIQ scores where both couples scored equally poorly on the sexuality subscale.

However, a clear imbalance is apparent in the affection component. Both rate their relationship as much less affectionate than they would like and Jean rates the relationship as less affectionate than Mac does.

Table 13
Waring Intimacy Questionnaire Scores (WIQ) and Importance Ratings for
Brad (Brd) and Janet (Jan).

<u>Intimacy Component</u>	<u>Brd WIQ</u>	<u>Jan WIQ</u>	<u>Brd IR</u>	<u>Jan IR</u>
Conflict Resolution	10	8	10	10
Affection	4	3	10	10
Cohesion	6	4	10	10
Sexuality	8	7	10	10
Identity	5	7	10	10
Compatibility	5	6	10	10
Autonomy	4	5	10	10
Expressiveness	9	7	10	10
Total Intimacy (-social des. score)	28	26		

Brad and Janet deliberately chose to score all the components of intimacy equally as they felt all were very important and it would be inappropriate to allocate them into a hierarchy.

This couple have negotiated their way to a balance in the dimensions of boundaries and loyalties, and hierarchy and status. In the intimacy dimension there is an imbalance in communication style with Janet expressing intimacy primarily verbally while Brad likes to give and receive intimate messages non-verbally, through touch. From the WIQ data there is a major imbalance apparent in most of the components between how both partners rated their relationship achievements and the importance ratings. This may be accounted for by their criticisms of the questionnaire as outlined earlier, or it may reflect the differences between their current reality and their ideals; both acknowledge they still have progress to make in developing intimacy to their satisfaction.

Table 14
Waring Intimacy Questionnaire Scores (WIQ) and Importance Ratings (IR)
for Julian (Jul) and Carol(Car).

<u>Conflict Resolution</u>	<u>Jul WIQ</u>	<u>Car WIQ</u>	<u>Jul IR</u>	<u>Car IR</u>
Conflict Resolution	10	9	8	7
Affection	10	7	9	10
Cohesion	9	5	10	10
Sexuality	3	7	9	9
Identity	9	9	9	9
Compatibility	10	6	8	7
Autonomy	10	6	8	5
Expressiveness	5	9	9	8
Total Intimacy (- social des. score)	21	28		

The indication from the Waring Intimacy Questionnaire data of Julian’s tendency to answer some questions but not others in a socially desirable way makes the identification of balances and imbalances in this relationship difficult. The intimacy matrices display a series of imbalances in this couples’ ratings of the different components of their relationship, mostly with Julian rating them more highly than Carol (with the exception of sexuality and expressiveness which have been mentioned above). However the only imbalance in the three dimensions of this model apparent in the narrative and from the interviewers’ observations is that of Carol being family centred and Julian work centred. As this role division was agreed upon by this couple and both enjoy their roles it could be argued this does not represent an imbalance.

Table 15
Waring Intimacy Questionnaire Scores (WIQ) and Importance Ratings (IR)
for Jan and Fred (Frd)

<u>Intimacy Components</u>	<u>Jan WIQ</u>	<u>Frd WIQ</u>	<u>Jan IR</u>	<u>Frd IR</u>
Conflict Resolution	3	1	7	10
Affection	5	5	10	5
Cohesion	6	8	10	9
Sexuality	3	3	4	8
Identity	8	2	7	6
Compatibility	4	5	7	4
Autonomy	9	5	5	3
Expressiveness	4	4	8	4
Total Intimacy (-social des. score)	21	13		

Table 15 shows an imbalance particularly in the identity and autonomy components with Jan scoring more highly than Fred in both components. The high scores in these components also lifted her overall intimacy rating considerably higher than Fred's. This suggests that the total intimacy score may reflect individual capacities as much as achievement. This couple also demonstrate an imbalance in all three dimensions of intimacy:

1/ Hierarchy and status: This is a dominant-submissive relationship as both clearly state that Fred is the head of the household and responsible for decision making. Jan describes Fred as more adequate and competent. However in the areas of literacy and social skills Fred is clearly less competent; neither acknowledge this though Jan attempts to cover for him. When questioned about

this at the final meeting Fred admitted that he felt like he was not very good at lots of things, was not liked by his workmates and had no friends. Jan admitted she "...sometimes finds it hard to respect Fred." Both continue to live as if this was not the case while knowing underneath that it is. One could surmise that this is a further source of tension in their relationship and Fred's resultant need to prove his authority a contributing factor to his violence.

2/ Boundaries and loyalties: Jan and Fred's relationship shows an imbalance of ownership and obligation. Fred believes it is his right to define Jan's boundaries; a belief that may play a role in his violence towards Jan. Jan feels obliged to make sexual contributions to the marriage; she seldom enjoys sex but Fred does not report this as a concern of his. As mentioned above, Jan also feels obliged to respect Fred but in reality, does not.

3/ Intimacy: an imbalance in the belongingness-separateness area. Jan takes more of the responsibility for the closeness and sharing in their relationship, Fred for the separateness. A further imbalance is evident in the sexual/non-sexual area: Fred uses sex as a way of expressing his affection and caring, Jan prefers non-sexual ways.

3 Levels of Relationship Maturity

A) Paul and White (1990) offer the conception of intimacy as a developmental process. The three levels of maturity in this model are illustrated here by the couples participating in this research:

1/ Self focused level of maturity

Fred sees his relationship with Jan from a perspective of how it affects himself, shows little awareness of, or concern for Jan's needs and lacks mature communication skills. Though Jan appears to function at the next level of maturity, it could be argued that intimacy is limited to the level of the lowest common denominator. Other factors here could be length of marriage and age; this couple have been together for the least number of years of the five couples in this study.

2/ Role focused level of maturity

Jean and Mac conform to stereotypes, are aware of the importance of communicating but have not successfully developed constructive communication skills and have a perspective of each other as individuals that is somewhat stereotypical. There is some indication of regression to a self focused level of maturity in recent times with the further deterioration of the relationship since Mac's retirement.

3/ Individuated connected level of maturity

The remaining three couples, interestingly those indicating an average level of intimacy, all show functioning at this level of maturity. They communicate well, discussing both concrete and abstract topics and are capable of resolving conflict though Julian and Carol do this perhaps less well than the other two couples. All have an intuitive perspective of themselves and their partner, express commitment to their relationship and have an understanding of what this involves. All three couples have shown they are capable of moving beyond stereotypical role divisions and work at developing and maintaining satisfactory sexual relationships that take account of individual needs.

B) Roughan and Jenkins (1990) have identified three alternative stages of relationship development; honeymoon, dispute and balance. As detailed above the two couples whose relationships appear deficient in intimacy; Jan and Fred, and Mac and Jean, can be seen to be in the dispute stage of this model. The remaining three couples appear to spend most of their time in the balance stage, utilising their conflict resolution skills to move quickly through dispute stages.

4/ The Important Processes and Principles of Intimacy

In this section the main processes and principles identified from the couples' stories will be presented. As there is a clear division between the behaviours and processes apparent in the relationships experienced as intimate and those not experienced as intimate the two groups will be dealt with separately.

Intimate Relationships

The important aspects of intimacy shared by the three couples with intimate relationships are:

a) Verbal communication, including conflict resolution and negotiation skills. The essential components here seem to be taking responsibility for one's own feelings and expressing them with clear direct messages (ie emotional self disclosure), not taking responsibility for one's partners feelings, and arranging a private time for communicating.

Couples reported the consequences of communicating in these ways as:

- i/ Deeper and more efficient communication, conflict is resolved more easily.
- ii/ The development of trust.
- iii/ Feeling understood and accepted.

The specific consequences of not taking responsibility for one's partner's feelings are that the speaker feels she or he has the space to express his or her feelings and the listener can accept these without feeling threatened and can offer sympathy, empathy and understanding.

b) Joint activities. Two of the couples with intimate relationships make specific plans to do things together without their children, the third couple are forced together a lot by their tiny living space and at present make plans for time apart.

c) Respect. All three intimate couples show respect for each other, value each other's contribution to the relationship, support each other and are friends who enjoy each other's company.

d) Boundaries. The important factor here seems to be discussing and reaching agreement on how to divide loyalty to self, the relationship and wider systems. This seems a more important factor in intimacy than having a balance in this dimension of the relationship.

e) The Separation of Sexual from Non-Sexual Touching. This is an important factor for all three couples; it had to be carefully negotiated for two and appears to have happened fairly naturally for the third couple. All three intimate couples reported being satisfied with their sexual relationship however still value non-sexual touching very much. This touching is seen as:

i/ An important part of the caring or attachment process; providing a feeling of togetherness, tension relief, validation and a way to communicate effectively with one's partner without having to use words.

ii/ An uncomplicated, safe way of facilitating closeness because of the clear limits set on it. Because these limits have to be negotiated, motives, fears and goals are clarified for both members of a transaction. Together with the nurturing features described above, the safety of the limits facilitates emotional self-disclosure and allow disagreement with a manageable amount of threat.

f) Male / Female Differences. The main difference evident for these three couples is that for women there appears to be a close connection between verbal communication, non-verbal contact and sex; the three are seen as interwoven components of intimacy. For men the sexual component is seen as separate.

g) Identity and Confidence. All six individuals in this category show signs of self-confidence and a clear sense of who they are and what is right for them.

Non-intimate Relationships

The important aspects of intimacy outlined above are almost totally absent from the relationships of the two couples expressing intimacy deficiencies:

a) Verbal communication, negotiation and conflict resolution.

Neither couple showed evidence of having the necessary skills as outlined above. The consequences of this appear to be a build up of resentment and anger.

b) Joint Activities. Neither couple have succeeded at finding mutually enjoyable activities and arranging opportunities to do them together.

c) Respect. Though Jan claims to respect her husband's superior decision making capacities she and Fred, and Jean and Mac, all demonstrate considerable lack of respect and even dislike of their partners. Jan is also the only one of the four who showed any sign of offering support to her partner.

d) Boundaries. Neither of these couples have good negotiation skills and both choose to conform to stereotypical gender role divisions. The consequences appear to have been for both couples to resent their partner's lack of involvement, valuing and interest in their sphere.

e) The Separation of Sexual From Non-Sexual Activity. Neither couple with an intimacy deficiency reported satisfaction with their sexual relationship; in fact both suffered from problems in this area. Neither couple had successfully negotiated the separation of these two forms of non-verbal communication. The consequences of this for Mac and Jean appear to have been misunderstanding, resentment and considerable physical separateness for most of their marriage.

Fred and Jan's relationship is complicated by inappropriate motives for sex; for example Fred's urge to have sex after fighting in order to gain comfort and reassurance. It is difficult to assess what the consequences of not having clearly negotiated non-sexual touching may be for this couple.

Both couples lamented the lack of caring, validation and closeness in their relationships. Emotional self-disclosure seldom occurs in either relationship and all four individuals appear to feel threatened by most disagreements.

f) Male / Female Differences. As already mentioned both couples follow traditional role divisions. Both women also expressed more interest in non-sexual touching than the men. Like the men with intimate relationships Fred and Mac see sex as something clearly separate from other forms of communication and intimacy.

g) Identity and Confidence. All four individuals who report low levels of intimacy show a lack of self-confidence and indications that they do not have a clear sense of themselves as valuable individuals.

Issues of Validity

Construct or reflexive validity was achieved by the inclusion of a framework of preunderstandings (see Appendix One), making clear the researcher's assumptions and beliefs at the outset of this study and recording her changing thinking as the research progressed. Acknowledging the lack of neutral objectivity facilitated a continual emphasis on the couples' own experiences. The logic of the data gathered was used to examine and criticise theories and models of intimacy.

The findings for four of the five couples were tentatively returned to the collaborators for discussion in order to refine and establish credibility. This process has been called criterion validity (Stiles, 1990) and face validity (Lather, 1986).

Stiles (1990) describes catalytic validity as the "...degree to which the research process re-orientes, focuses and energises participants." (p. 32) At the final meeting of this study Ian and Elizabeth mentioned that receiving a copy of their story in the mail had been like getting photos of a very special holiday. The indepth interview had been for them a valuable opportunity to reflect and comment on the major changes they had achieved in their relationship in recent years.

Julian and Carol's attendance at a marriage enrichment course may be at least partly attributed to their participation in this study which they said focused their attention on the quality of their relationship which had received little attention in some years. Brad and Janet sent a long letter to the researcher some time after the conclusion of the study, indicating they had been considerably energised by being collaborators in this process. The letter was accompanied by alternative suggestions for their pseudonyms, one of which was adopted, and an invitation to a party.

Fred and Jan separated after their involvement in this study; whether their role as research collaborators played a part in this decision is unknown. Both regard the separation as temporary and Fred has approached Men Against Violence for help. In the final discussion with Jean and Mac, Jean reported feeling upset after discussing her problematic relationship with Mac. Some weeks later this couple were observed shopping together, an activity Jean had expressed a desire to do during the interview for this study.

Conclusion

In this descriptive study significant topics arising from the transcripts were written up to form each couple's story. As well as studying the stories as presented, they were then examined from the perspective of different theories and models of intimacy. This provided information on the components of intimacy, the connection between levels of relationship maturity and intimacy, intimacy as a process, and the significance of relationship balances and imbalances to intimacy. This process led to an awareness of the importance of integrating information from different perspectives in order to achieve as global a view as possible, rather than singling out one approach and arguing its merits.

The results indicate that the term intimacy is used interchangeably to refer to both a process and to the consequences of that process: a subjective relational experience of closeness, caring, understanding and validation.

Chapter Six

DISCUSSION

Close relationships are an intrinsically difficult phenomenon to investigate. Many of the most important components are inherently subjective, and others are distorted by subjective impressions, yielding data that can be difficult to interpret. Relationships are interactive, dyadic, and time-bound, necessitating special methodologies. (Clark and Reis, 1988, p. 662)

This study into the nature of intimacy used primarily qualitative methodology with the aim of allowing people to construct their own stories about their experiences of intimacy. The Waring Intimacy Questionnaire was used to obtain quantitative data on the components of intimacy. In-depth interviews provide the related contextual information and an opportunity to illuminate one particular intimate behaviour; non-sexual touching. The results indicate that intimacy is both a process and a subjective relational experience, the latter arising from the former.

Many important features of the intimacy process and experience can be viewed from the varying perspectives of major interpersonal theories and models of intimacy. As will now be discussed, the stories of the five couples in this study demonstrate both the relevance and the incompleteness of each of these theories and models.

The Components of Intimacy

Waring et al (1980, 1981, 1984) describe intimacy as a dimension interacting with two other dimensions of a relationship; power and boundary. They developed a measure of the quantity and quality of marital intimacy that is based around eight components and developed from spontaneous understandings of the concept of intimacy. The Waring Intimacy Questionnaire has proved a useful adjunct for this study of intimacy; as described in the previous chapter data gathered by this means does not show any major contradictions with the narrative data. The questionnaire provides helpful, if somewhat limited, information on the components of intimacy. It would seem that conflict resolution, affection, cohesion, sexuality, identity, compatibility, expressiveness and autonomy all play a role in the development and maintenance of intimacy. Criticisms of some aspects of this measure are outlined in Appendix B, section three; however as a measure of the level of intimacy and as a way of identifying the level of each of the individual components of intimacy, this questionnaire appears effective.

The stories of couples in this study reveal the many inadequacies of a model of intimacy based on components. The Waring Intimacy Questionnaire does not address the different stages a relationship may pass through or the cumulative effects of an ongoing relationship. No information is provided on how the process of intimacy works; intimacy is seen simply as a static, measurable state. The matter of metacognitions is also not addressed, yet the way an individual perceives a partner's communications undoubtedly has consequences for intimacy. The Waring Questionnaire gathers data on eight components of intimacy but the results provide little information about the behaviours that may contribute to or inhibit the development of intimacy such as eye contact or touching. A further lack of detail is apparent in the omission of information on a couple's or individual's values and beliefs. If a couple give their relationship a low rating in one component and this is a component that is important to them both, this would have different consequences for intimacy than if the component is not important to either partner. Finally, although areas of imbalance in the components of a relationship are clearly apparent from the subscale scores, imbalances in the dimensions of a relationship are not addressed. This model of intimacy is not complex enough to incorporate the effects of any imbalances or to consider the process of achieving intimacy, despite the imbalances.

Balances, Imbalances and the Intimacy Process

Roughan and Jenkins (1990) have proposed a developmental model of relationships that incorporates the same three dimensions as the Waring Intimacy Questionnaire; intimacy, power and boundary. The model facilitates identification of imbalances in each of these dimensions. The systemic perspective demonstrates that an imbalance in any one of the dimensions can affect behaviour both in that dimension and in the other two dimensions.

The stories of the couples in this study suggest that having a balance in all dimensions of a relationship is not a necessary prerequisite for an intimate relationship, or a happy one. Furthermore it would appear that a balance in the intimacy dimension is not essential for a relationship to be intimate. Elizabeth and Ian clearly rate as having an intimate relationship yet Ian particularly values sexual intimacy and Elizabeth non-sexual. How the intimacy process functions despite this imbalance seems an important question. For this couple important components of it may include: their 'nsh' (the non-sexual hug), their communication and conflict resolution skills, their enduring friendship and their strong commitment to their relationship, part of which comes from their Christian faith.

Mac and Jean demonstrate a relationship with an imbalance in all three dimensions of their relationship. The Waring data shows Jean rating affection, autonomy and overall intimacy considerably lower than Mac, thus they have imbalances in various components of intimacy too. The extent to which Jean's high level of distress about the relationship affects these ratings can only be estimated. As we know that imbalances in themselves do not necessarily produce a relationship lacking in intimacy, it would seem probable that there are other factors missing from this relationship than intimacy. The subscale profile from the Waring Intimacy Questionnaire shows clear deficits in the areas of affection, conflict resolution, sexuality, compatibility and expressiveness. Perhaps these missing factors are part of the intimacy process that, judging by their level of dissatisfaction, seems not to be operating in Mac and Jean's relationship. This couple's choice to remain together may be an indication of a latent cohesion process (eg. both may get considerable satisfaction from quarrelling with the other) or may simply reflect pressures and fears relating to separation.

Brad and Janet are aware of an imbalance in the intimacy dimension of their relationship, yet maintain a satisfying level of intimacy. The process of achieving

this appears to include discussing their different needs, acknowledging the importance of the others' needs and whenever possible joining with the other in meeting these needs.

Carol and Julian have a boundary imbalance according to the Roughan and Jenkins model yet as their role division was agreed upon by this couple and both are enjoying the roles they now have it could be argued that there are fewer obstacles for intimacy to overcome in this relationship. Despite this imbalance and some imbalances in the components of intimacy they manage to maintain intimacy of a level satisfactory to them.

With the discrepancy in levels of maturity discussed in the next section and an imbalance in each dimension of their relationship the chances of Jan and Fred achieving an intimate relationship without a great deal of work seem remote.

How to achieve a balance between the needs of the relationship and one's own needs as an autonomous individual is an important issue raised by the Jenkins and Roughan model. By comparing the intimate relationships in this study with those that have not achieved a satisfying degree of intimacy, one begins to get some insight into what this process may involve and the questions arise: Does the process of communication function in the same way in other dimensions of a relationship as it does in the intimacy dimension? Is the communication process something that contributes to intimacy or are the two processes one and the same thing? A review of the data gathered in the light of Reis and Shaver's (1988) model of intimacy and Reis's (1990) relational principles suggests a framework for further understanding both the process of intimacy and the process of communication. This will be discussed further, below. It would appear that the process of communicating well both contributes to and can be a result of couples' subjective experiences of intimacy.

Levels of Relationship Maturity

Paul and White's (1990) developmental conception of intimacy suggests that an individual's capacity for intimacy is linked to progress in identity development and related maturity. Although no correlation was evident between the Waring identity ratings and levels of intimacy, the developmental model's levels of relationship maturity certainly correlate with the overall levels of intimacy. All three couples with intimate relationships could be seen to be functioning at this model's highest level of maturity; the individuated connected level. The extent to which individuals have achieved a capacity for direct communication, efficient conflict resolution, mutual respect and caring, and being responsible for their own feelings but not their partners' clearly has an impact on their ability to form intimate relationships.

The possibility that one partner in a relationship is capable of functioning at a different level of maturity than the other, and the consequences of this, is not discussed in this model. Fred functions at a self-focused level of maturity and Jan at the next level up; the role focused level. This relationship suggests that intimacy can only be created at a level both partners are capable of reaching.

Several of the model's reviewed made reference to Erikson's (1950) theory that identity precedes the capacity for intimacy, though altering it somewhat in suggesting that while a secure sense of identity is necessary to effectively participate in an intimate relationship, the very nature of intimacy means that it contributes further to the development of a sense of identity.

No clear patterns of the relationship between intimacy and identity have emerged in the present study. Couples rated as having an intimate relationship and those rated as deficient in intimacy showed a variety of identity ratings as measured by the Waring Intimacy Questionnaire. For example Brad, struggling somewhat over his rejection of the traditional male stereotype and having not yet secured a strong sense of an alternative that is appropriate for him, rated low in identity yet has successfully developed an intimate relationship with Janet. His very struggle over his identity has been a subject of many intimate discussions between him and Janet. An alternative measure of intimacy may have yielded different results; it could be suggested that in order to be able to question his own powerful conditioning, Brad has a stronger sense of himself than someone who has accepted an image of himself passed down through generations.

Dowrick (1991) interweaves the importance of identity development with Reis and Shaver's (1988) concept of an interpretive filter, when she comments that how people experience their own sense of self affects how they experience others. " Intimacy begins from the inside, it begins with your own self." (p. 5) She goes on to suggest that a prerequisite for being intimate is living your own life; this gives a sense of being alive from within.

The necessity of having a well defined sense of one's own identity is reinforced by Paul and White's (1990) model of relationship maturity. In order to take responsibility for one's own feelings and to be able to express them clearly; skills exercised at the highest level of maturity, an individual needs to know what it is he/she is feeling. Considerable confidence and strength is needed to acknowledge that how one reacts to a partner's behaviour is one's own choice and not the partner's fault. When one can stand alone in this way, accepting responsibility for one's strengths and weaknesses, then the capacity for intimacy as it has been described in this study must be greater.

The Important Processes and Principles of Intimacy

An examination of the important processes identified from the couples’ stories and presented in the previous chapter reveals a single uniting factor: communication. These processes; conflict resolution, expressing feelings, planning to spend time together or apart, showing respect by listening to and accepting each other’s contribution to the relationship, discussing and reaching agreement on how to balance loyalties to self, partner, family, work and other demands, negotiating for sexual and non-sexual contact: all necessitate well developed communication skills.

Looked at from this perspective, Reis and Shaver’s (1988) model of the intimacy process, as illustrated below, can be seen to be an indepth view of communication in an intimate relationship. Each of the steps in this model are discussed in the light of the information gathered from the couple’s stories.

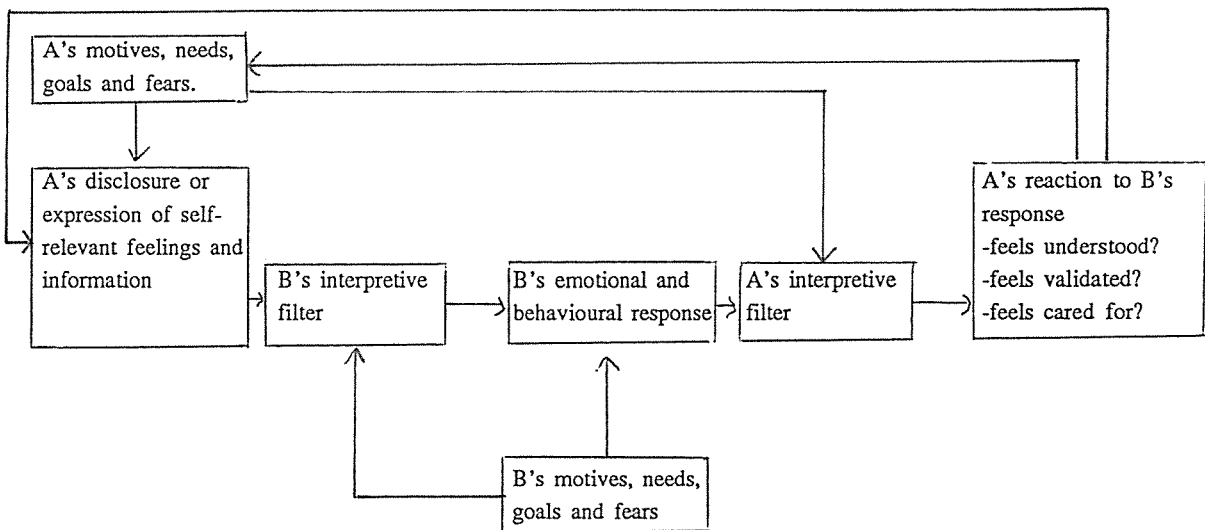


Figure 2 A Model of the Intimacy Process (Reis and Shaver, 1988)

1/ The expression of self relevant feelings and information was clearly shown by the couples in this study to play an important role in intimacy. This emotional self disclosure is the major step in providing an opportunity for a partner to demonstrate caring and understanding and for the discloser to receive this reassurance and nurturance, thus, as suggested by Reis and Shaver, feeling validated.

For both couples with an intimacy deficit, each member lamented the absence of validation but seldom risked self-disclosure. The remaining six participants all gave examples of valuing both their partner's willingness to risk self-disclosure, and the cumulative consequences of this, which will be discussed further below. Carol and Julian, with their lack of verbal expression of feelings, provide a reminder that expressing self relevant feelings can be accomplished non-verbally. The important role of non-sexual touching in their and the two other intimate relationships indicates that this behaviour functions as a very effective form of communication; a way of expressing self-relevant feelings and information non-verbally.

Attachment is established, maintained and expressed largely non-verbally. All participants in this research expressed a desire for components of the attachment process such as responsiveness, sensitivity and empathy; those who received them regularly were the couples who described their relationships as being intimate. Reis's (1990) claim that some of the essential features and processes of intimacy are those described in Bowlby's attachment theory, appears to have merit.

2/ The motives, needs, fears and goals of both partners are seen in this model as a part of any intimate transaction; an inevitable part of communicating feelings. Non-sexual touching was the intimate transaction explored in greatest depth in this study. Participants' discussions of this certainly confirm that their tendencies towards intimacy fluctuated according to two factors: each partner's understanding of their own motives, needs, fears and goals and their perception of their partner's.

For example the fear that one's partner would want sex had stopped at least one member of each couple from offering or receiving physical contact. Clarifying this by negotiating for non-sexual touching involved discussing fears and motives and clearly establishing joint goals for an individual transaction and for the relationship. The three couples who had done this all had more intimate

relationships than the two couples who had not. Jean and Mac offer a tragic example of what can happen when a couple does not openly and honestly communicate their thoughts and feelings on this issue.

3/ The interpretive filter is Reis and Shaver's term for the process of metacognition. Every individual has a filter, developed from past experiences. It functions to determine how one perceives a partner's behaviour in any intimate transaction. Perlmutter and Hatfield (1980) suggest that every time a serious issue arises at the literal level, partners must intentionally comment about the relational context of the message for the relationship to remain intimate. The contention that this need happen over every single serious issue for a relationship to remain intimate would seem to be suggestive of a very intense relationship. However the importance of acknowledging and sharing feelings and understandings about what is happening in an interaction should not be understated.

All three couples in this study who had negotiated successfully for non-sexual touching offer an illustration of both how this process operates and the very positive consequences when it is used well to both partner's advantage.

4/ The Emotional and Behavioural Response. The metacommunications recommended by Perlmutter and Hatfield, or alternative responses, are made after interpreting a partner's behaviour. Any interpretations are of course influenced by an individual's motives, needs, fears and goals as shown in the model illustrated above. Clearly the nature of the response is a crucial factor. The couples in this study upheld Reis and Shaver's contention that an appropriate response is just as important in creating intimacy as the initial disclosure. The experience of having their request for a hug or their verbal expression of feelings accepted and understood was highly valued by participants. They also demonstrated that their expectations and schemata (major ingredients of an interpretive filter) produced metacognitions which strongly influenced their response in interactions with their partners, even to the extent of misinterpreting a partner's communication.

For example Macs' belief that touching Jeans' breasts was an appropriate way for him to show his appreciation and affection for her led him to persist in this behaviour despite her adverse reactions. Self-disclosure from Jean on this issue may have led to Mac altering his schemata accordingly thus being open to understanding Jean's reaction and finding a more appropriate way of meeting his goal. Similarly if Mac had communicated more on this issue Jean may have

been able to alter her interpretive filter and react differently. Clearly both would have to be aware of their goals, needs, fears and motives to do this.

The couples who had negotiated to establish non-sexual touching in their relationships appear to, in effect, have found a short cut through their interpretive filters. As Elizabeth suggests non-sexual touching is " ...a password, a fast track through the filter system." Not only are each partners' motives, needs and goals made clear and their fears alleviated but this form of non-verbal communication can very quickly and efficiently provide caring and validation; important outcome goals of the intimacy process. Elizabeth further suggested that non-sexual touching also plays a supporting role while she and Ian risk exposing themselves to each other and struggling with the difficulties of balancing the needs of the relationship with each of their individual needs. In these ways non-sexual touching can be seen to very effectively facilitate intimacy and to be an intimate act in itself.

The details of how this particular intimate behaviour functions and whether it is of significance to all intimate relationships would be an interesting subject for future research. Many studies (eg. Harlow, 1958) have suggested that the intimate act of touching can also directly fulfill a basic human need. Montagu (1971) argues that as touch induces neural, muscular, glandular and mental changes it is not simply experienced as a sensation but also affectively as an emotion. From the insights gained in this study it is only possible to speculate on the consequences for intimacy of such a powerful behaviour. It would seem to be more than coincidence that the three couples with intimate relationships had successfully incorporated non-sexual touching into their relationships and the two couples reporting low levels of intimacy had failed to do this to their satisfaction.

A possible addition to the Reis and Shaver model would be arrows from the interpretive filter back to the motives and needs box as one's expectations, beliefs and attributions also seem to affect one's motives, needs, fears and goals. Ian's belief that only through successful intercourse can he feel fully male seems at least part of what leads him to continue initiating sex with Elizabeth even though she expresses little interest in sexual activity.

5/ The initiators reaction to his/her partner's response. According to this model, in order to perceive an interaction as intimate the initiator of an interaction

requires three factors: to feel understood, validated and cared for. The exploration of non-sexual touching in the present study provides an excellent illustration of the whole intimacy process, including this final stage. In order to feel understood Reis and Shaver suggest the initiator has to believe that his or her partner accurately perceives the initiators' needs, beliefs, ideas, self definition and situation.

Touch, in a sexual relationship, clearly can be interpreted in various ways. The process of negotiating for non-sexual touching is itself an intimate transaction requiring self-disclosure on at least one partners' behalf and an appropriate response. This allows the discloser(s) to feel understood and cared for, as described above, with the further consequence of this being to feel validated. Once the negotiation is complete any act of non-sexual touching can offer a subjective experience of intimacy very quickly and easily.

Reis and Shaver add depth to their model with the recognition that intimacy is more than the sum of repeated interactions. The long term effects of successfully intimate and unsuccessful interactions are evident in the couples' stories. How this process occurs is described by this model. For Jan and Fred and for Mac and Jean unpleasant memories of past encounters can be seen to have an influence in several ways: These memories impact on each individuals' goals, motives and fears which then reduces their willingness to risk self-disclosing. Past memories can also influence the way each individual interprets their partner's behaviour. The remaining couples showed indications of a framework of trust established from the accumulation of intimate transactions, which itself contributed to the likelihood of further intimacy.

Commitment existed in all five relationships studied, indicated perhaps not least by each couples decision to remain in their relationship. It is certainly possible that Reis and Shaver's suggestion that commitment arises from the emotions engendered in intimate interactions is partially correct. Other factors evident in this study as contributing to commitment are religious and secular beliefs about marriage being forever, fear of being alone, wanting to set a "good" example to others, habit and convenience.

Developing metaperspectives, a sense of "we-ness", is certainly something that separated the intimate from the non-intimate relationships. Paul and White (1990) see this as a sign of a mature intimate relationship; couples are capable of developing mutuality.

Reciprocity, offering to one's partner what one has received from that partner, was evident in all five relationships. As suggested in the model those who received understanding and caring did reciprocate, as did those who received criticism.

Reis and Shaver's contention that public recognition can facilitate intimacy was not apparent in this study. Fred and Jan stated that one of their reasons for staying together, even though both were unhappy with their relationship, was to set a good example for other couples in their church. Public recognition can be seen to facilitate pressure to remain married for this couple, rather than contributing to the quality of the marriage.

The final role of the relationship Reis and Shaver propose is stability; successful intimate transactions engendering positive expectations, security and trust which in turn help foster further intimacy. With the exception of Carol and Julian all participants described considerable difficulties and "arid patches" in their relationships. That two couples have managed to overcome these difficulties and two have not to date, may well reflect the accumulating consequences of situations well handled. Certainly both couples reporting a low level of intimacy had considered and experienced temporary separation in the past, indicating less stability than the intimate relationships.

The Reis and Shaver model of the intimacy process omits a consideration of the effects of balances and imbalances in each dimension of a relationship and in the various components of intimacy. This overview of a relationship has been shown to contribute towards an understanding of the nature of intimacy.

A further omission is that the model does not at first glance account for all of the relational principles evident in the data gathered. The sharing of tasks and recreation was mentioned as an important factor in each of the three intimate relationships and as a regretted omission in the other two relationships. Shared activities do not necessarily require self-disclosure, a compulsory step in Reis and Shaver's model, however they do seem to play an important role in intimate relationships. Perhaps by offering a sense of solidarity and an opportunity to have fun, shared activities provide acceptance, validation and caring in an unspoken way. As one could argue that by going for a walk together a couple are indirectly expressing self-relevant feelings to each other (eg. "I enjoy your company.") a further improvement to this model would be the addition of the

qualifiers: directly or indirectly, verbally or non-verbally to the self-disclosure step.

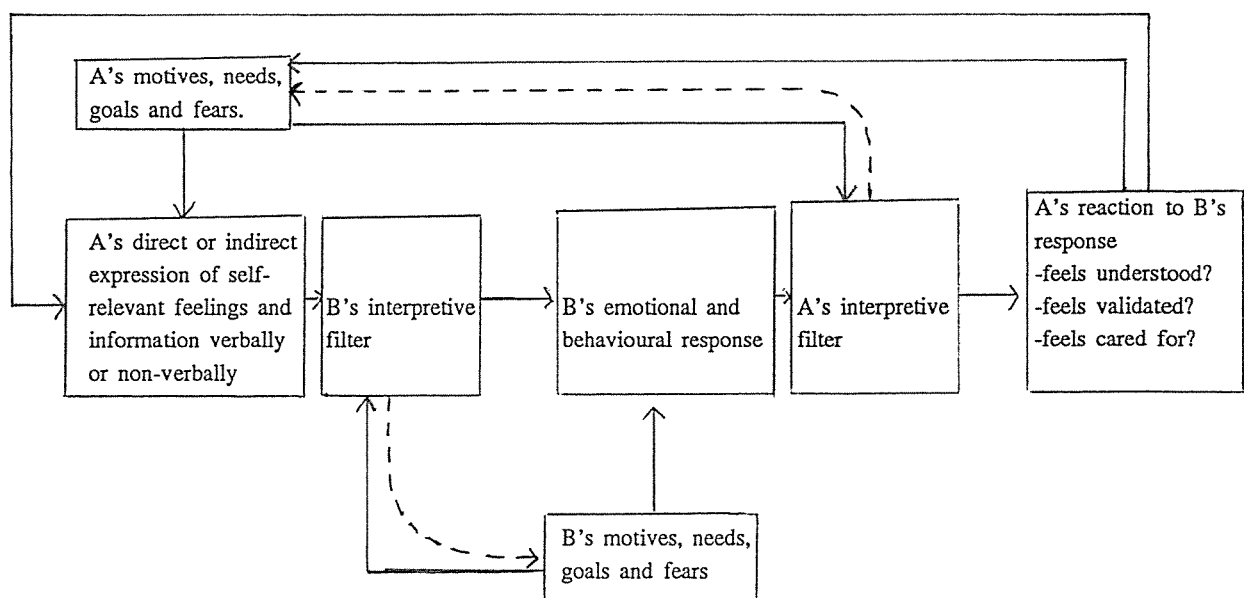


Figure 3 A Proposed New Model of the Intimacy Process

With these adjustments Reis and Shaver’s model of the intimacy process offers a description of the communication process followed by the three couples in this study who reported having intimate relationships. The model also provides a useful way of identifying where the other two couples have encountered problems in their communications.

Conclusion

This study has reviewed the contribution of various theories and models of intimacy in the light of the rich resource provided by the five couples participating. An important finding has been that the data gathered in intimacy research is determined to some extent by the research perspective adopted. By going beyond the structured format of the Waring Intimacy Questionnaire and allowing couples to construct their own stories of intimacy in their relationship it has been revealed that none of the current models and theories of intimacy are sufficiently comprehensive to fully describe this concept.

In choosing a qualitative approach the present study recognises that any behaviour or subjective experience is the result of many different complex transactions (Manicas and Secord, 1983) and that the meaning of anything is contextually grounded. (Mishler, 1986) By encouraging participants to tell their own stories in their own way, any information offered is allowed to remain in context thus providing a more global perspective than a quantitative approach.

The findings on the nature of intimacy indicate that intimacy can be seen as a dyadic process, a dimension of a relationship, and a subjective experience. In order to gain the best understanding of this complex phenomenon all three perspectives need to be incorporated. Within this there are both relationship and individual factors that determine the quantity and quality of intimacy developed and maintained.

The stage of relationship, the cumulative effects of an ongoing relationship, relationship maturity, other dimensions of a relationship, intercouple imbalances or difficulties in any dimension or component of a relationship, and each of the essential steps in the communication process; all these relationship factors have an important contribution to determining the nature of intimacy. Equally importantly there are individual components of the intimacy process: verbal behaviours such as self-disclosure, non-verbal behaviours such as touching, individual levels of maturity and the associated extent of identity development. Less easy to identify and explain are the metacommunications each individual makes; these evolve from an individual's motives, needs, fears, goals and beliefs. They effect the way a partner's behaviour is interpreted and the response to that behaviour.

As suggested by Yin (1984) this study presents three cases demonstrating a literal replication; the relationships of Elizabeth and Ian, Carol and Julian, and Brad and Janet all fit consistently into the theoretical framework described earlier in this chapter as being the conditions of an intimate relationship. Mac and Jean, and Jan and Fred are cases demonstrating a theoretical replication; their relationships lack many of the conditions of an intimate relationship and are described by them in their narratives and in their questionnaire ratings as being deficient in intimacy. The single factor uniting all the important processes in these three intimate relationships and missing from the non-intimate relationships is communication; staying in touch, whether physically, emotionally, intellectually or spiritually or a combination of these modes.

This study demonstrates that developing and maintaining intimacy requires the interweaving of well developed communication skills and personal maturity. For two unique individuals to create intimacy each needs to feel accepted and understood by the other. Failure to receive this validation can precipitate in an individual, an unwillingness to self-disclose and to offer understanding and acceptance in return. At first consideration the task of offering acceptance and understanding may sound relatively simple. However, to be able to accept another's reality when it differs from one's own or from what one would like one's partner to believe or feel, and to be able to take responsibility for one's own feelings rather than blaming them on a partner, certainly require a well defined sense of one's own identity and the accompanying confidence and maturity. Perhaps the current high separation rates are a comment on the difficulty of this task of maintaining intimacy.

Dowrick (1991) contends that individuals wanting intimacy must risk being very open and honest and must be able to cope with their partner's openness and honesty. Both need to be able to hear the meanings that lie behind the words spoken and to accept the other as they are, rather than as each unconsciously needs the other to be.

It would seem that a paradox inherent in the nature of intimacy is that one needs to be able to stand alone in order to be intimate.

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Appendix A

STATEMENT OF FORESTRUCTURE

A statement of the researcher's forestructure is important in qualitative research. An account of the preliminary framework on which any interpretations are based, this needs to include:

1/ Information about the core concepts of the study and the researcher's developing understanding and refinement of these concepts.

2/ An account of the researcher's personal experience and beliefs as relevant to the topic under study.

3/ A statement of the researcher's basic assumptions about human nature and interaction.

In setting out the following information, I am acknowledging that "...there is no detached, privileged standpoint from which one objectively records reality." Addison (1989). Though it is never possible to completely separate oneself from one's own pre-understandings it is important to be as clear as possible about the way these influence the work in progress in order to avoid the research account becoming little more than a projection of these pre-understandings.

A further benefit of developing a forestructure is that while needing to avoid the danger of imposing a rigid framework on the couples who will be research collaborators, this process has provided the clarity and focus necessary to also avoid collecting a great bulk of irrelevant material.

The seeds of this project were first sown while I was working as a Marriage Guidance counsellor during the 1980's. Under supervision from a sex therapist I quite frequently administered the sensate focus programme, first introduced by Masters and Johnson and described by Kaplan (1974) to couples presenting with a variety of sexual dysfunctions and dissatisfactions. Though not all couples resolved their presenting problem fully, of note was the relief and pleasure expressed when they learned to differentiate between sexual and non-sexual touching. Many reported this as a changing point in their relationship.

The sensate focus programme involves a series of structured exercises aimed at achieving sensuality and arousal while minimizing performance demands. One great value of the sensate focus programme as observed by and reported to me,

was that in banning sexual intercourse for the initial stages it offered an opportunity for the couple to experience non-demand touching. (ie. an opportunity to get one's touching needs met without feeling obliged to have sex in return.) As couple therapy remains an intense interest, and many of the couples I work with now still show little understanding of this important issue I began researching the field of sex and couple's therapy to see if contemporary clinicians shared my belief in the importance of separating sexual from non-sexual touching. It appeared that this was neither a sufficiently complex nor specialised concept to attract interest.

Leiblum and Rosen's (1989) *Principles and Practice of Sex Therapy* contains warnings by almost every contributor of the dangers of underestimating the complexity of each of the many nominated categories of sexual dysfunctions. In a chapter on the evaluation and treatment of erectile dysfunction the described approach involves nocturnal penile tumescence testing, endocrine, vascular and neurological evaluation, a full physical examination and separate interviews with both the "patient" and his partner.

Zilbergeld's (in Leiblum and Pervin, 1980) contribution on the subject of erectile dysfunction makes an interesting contrast. Writing in the previous edition of Leiblum and Rosen's volume quoted above, Zilbergeld comments that the chances of sexual problems are highest when we have sex without our conditions for sex being met and when we are using sex as a way of fulfilling non-sexual needs like the need for comfort or love. He clearly has a somewhat less complex understanding of the causes of erectile failure. Zilbergeld suggests to his male reader that his penis may simply be uninterested in his desire for cuddling and may refuse to respond.

One might speculate on the reasons for Zilbergeld's omission from the updated volume; perhaps his theories and treatment programme have been demonstrated by some to not achieve statistically significant improvements or perhaps he chose not to contribute to a work that did not reflect his personal philosophy and approach to sex therapy. More useful than speculation, would be to explore with couples their ideas, feelings and experiences in relation to Zilbergeld's (1978) suggestions that "...we suffer from sensory starvation, a lack of non-sexual touching and worse than that many of us are unaware of how damaging this state of affairs is" (p. 131) and further that "...the amount and quality of our non-sexual touching experiences are intimately related to how satisfied we are with our sexual activities." (p. 131)

Zilbergeld (1978) describes touch as an end in itself in its ability to bridge physical separateness and establish a sense of solidarity between two individuals. Jules Older (1982), an enthusiastic promoter of the benefits of touch, comments that touching is "...the kind of nourishment that most adults give to cats and dogs but not to each other." (p. 106)

Shere Hite (1976) devotes a chapter in *The Hite Report* to listing the changes for which women had expressed a desire. "One of the most basic changes involves valuing touching and closeness just for their own sakes- rather than only as a prelude to intercourse or orgasm." (p. 553) Many of the women included in this report expressed either sadness or anger over their partners' perceived inability to separate sex from touching.

The impression one gains from Hite (1976) is that this is a male problem. Both Zilbergeld (1978) and McCarthy (1988) in their work on male sexuality acknowledge the problem as having negative consequences for both men and women and refer to the role of male societal conditioning in creating the situation. My personal belief is that it is not useful to place "blame" for relationship problems on any one partner. In working with both partners one can explore the values, beliefs, feelings, perceptions and behaviours that have fostered the current dynamics in the relationship.

This project evolved into one of proposing indepth interviews with couples in order to learn the significance of touch to each individual in the relationship and the effects of the presence or absence of non-sexual touching. The next question was: the effects on what? Was it meaningful to ask couples about one aspect of their relationships without having a broader understanding of the whole relationship; the many factors other than non-sexual touching that may contribute towards a satisfactory relationship? On the other hand the research project needed to be sufficiently focused to not gather an overwhelming amount of information.

Interpersonal intimacy appeared to be both an appropriately comprehensive and sufficiently focused concept. The project evolved a further step. In order to gain some insight into why and how the presence of non-sexual touching affects a relationship it would first be necessary to further understand the nature of intimacy. Clearly the latter task would be sufficient challenge for one masterate thesis. A future research project could be to explore in depth the significance of non-sexual touching and the role it plays in intimacy; for this project non-sexual

touching was seen as one possible component of intimacy and used to provide greater insight into the intimacy process.

The further development of my understandings of the concepts involved is reflected in the ongoing process of this project, which itself is reflected in the mode of presentation.

Appendix B

THE WARING INTIMACY QUESTIONNAIRE

Section One: Validation of the Waring Intimacy Questionnaire

Waring and Reddon (1983) adopted from Berman and Lief (1975) the theory that interpersonal dyadic relationships can be defined by three relatively independent dimensions: boundary, power and intimacy. However they concluded from Schutz's (1975, in Waring and Reddon) intimacy research that as the development of intimacy is a process, boundary and power cannot be isolated from the definition of intimacy.

In order to develop construct validity Waring and Reddon used Jackson's (1970, 1971, in Waring and Reddon, 1983) sequential strategy as outlined below:

1/ Psychological theory: Having reviewed the research on concepts of intimacy and problems associated with the lack of intimacy Waring, McElrath, Mitchell et al., (1983) confirmed with their own research that intimacy is the major determinant of marital adjustment and that the less the intimacy in a relationship the higher the likelihood of nonpsychotic emotional illness.

The validity of the questionnaire could thus be evaluated by relating it to existing reliable and valid measures of marital adjustment. Furthermore convergent and discriminant validity could be evaluated by relating intimacy to conceptually similar measures or with theoretically unrelated constructs and their relationship to marital adjustment.

The authors' studies (eg Waring, McElrath, Lefcoe and Weisz, 1981) led to an operational definition of intimacy that includes eight facets; conflict resolution, affection, cohesion, sexuality, identity, compatibility, expressiveness and autonomy. Before writing any items however Waring (1984) developed mutually exclusive and specific definitions for each of these variables.

2/ Suppressing response style variance: The WIQ includes a social desirability scale to control for response style and an infrequency scale to control for non-purposeful responding. The original 496 items were edited for brevity, balance of true and false, conformity to definition, adequacy of negative behaviours, clarity and nonambiguity, freedom from extreme desirability bias, comprehensiveness of marital circumstances, discriminating power and freedom from sexual bias.

3/ Homogeneity and Generalizability: The 496 item questionnaire was administered to 115 married individuals. Items were eliminated if they demonstrated no discrimination value, if their correlation with the total intimacy score was .40 or less, if they failed to correlate most highly with their own item scale score and if their next highest correlation was social desirability.

The resulting 160 item scale was administered to 253 married individuals of varying ages and length of marriage. The items were then analysed on an item efficiency index to identify the 10 best items on each of the eight scales to develop an intimacy profile which can be used in three separate ways: individual qualitative intimacy profile, a couple's intimacy incompatibility and total intimacy.

4/ Convergent and Discriminant Validity: Discriminant validity is suggested by a negative correlation with a questionnaire designed to measure mood (Profile of Mood States, in Waring, 1983) and another with a General Health Questionnaire designed to detect non-psychotic emotional illness. These findings support the theory that the level of intimacy is inversely correlated to nonpsychotic emotional illness.

To demonstrate convergent validity Waring (1984) quotes a highly significant ($r = 0.77$) correlation of WIQ scores with Schaefer and Olson's (1981) Personal Assessment of Intimacy in Relationships.

5/ Test-Retest Reliability and Internal Consistency:

Administering the 90 items to 152 married individuals on two occasions two weeks apart gave test-retest reliability scores of .89 for males and .86 for females total intimacy score; scores for the scales ranged from .73 to .90. Kuder Richardson formula 20 reliabilities for the scales ranged from .52 to .87; total intimacy scores were .78 for males and .81 for females.

6/ Criterion Validity: The WIQ showed significant positive correlations with the PAIR (Schaefer and Olson, 1981) which has been shown to correlate positively with marital adjustment and a measure of family cohesion.

Waring acknowledges that a weakness of this data is the lack of comparison with observer ratings and behavioural measures. There is also a need to operationally define the other dimensions of a dyadic relationship; power and boundary. When measures of these have been developed it may be possible to establish more clearly the intimacy domain and to describe the processes acting within it.

Section Two: The Questionnaire

INSTRUCTIONS

There are 90 statements in this booklet. They are statements about marriages. You are to decide which of these statements are true of your marriage and which are false. Make all your marks on the separate answer sheets. If you think the statement is TRUE or mostly TRUE of your marriage, make an X in the box labeled T (true). If you think the statement is FALSE or mostly FALSE of your marriage, make an X in the box labeled F (false). Remember we would like to know what your marriage seems like to YOU. So DO NOT try to figure out how your spouse will see your marriage, but DO give us your general impression of your marriage for each statement.

1. Differences of opinion never lead to verbal abuse in our relationship.
2. I am at my best when we are together.
3. Without my marriage my life would lack meaning.
4. I ask my spouse for the things that really turn me on.
5. I often feel insecure in social situations.
6. I wish my spouse enjoyed more the activities that I enjoy.
7. I enjoy spending time with my in-laws.
8. If there is one thing that my spouse and I are good at, it's talking about our feelings to each other.
9. I don't think any couple live together with greater harmony than my spouse and I.
10. Our differences of opinion lead to shouting matches.
11. I always kiss my spouse goodbye.
12. Our marital satisfaction is more important than career decisions.
13. Sometimes sex seems more like work than play to me.
14. Compared to other people that I know I lack self-esteem.
15. We seem to work out how to share the chores at our house.
16. Whenever we visit my spouses' parents, I feel awkward because I have nothing to talk about.
17. Often I only pretend to listen when my spouse talks.
18. I have some needs that are not being met by our marriage.
19. Discussing problems with my spouse seldom leads to arguments.
20. I feel that there is a distance between my spouse and I.
21. I value our marital relationship above all else.
22. I think that the importance of sex is highly over-rated in marriage.

23. I have a strong sense of who I am.
24. My spouse and I share the same philosophy in life.
25. My in-law's advice is often appreciated and welcome.
26. I prefer to keep my personal thoughts to myself.
27. My mate has all of the qualities I have always wanted in a spouse.
28. Old wounds are always reopened when we have differences of opinion.
29. Despite being married I often feel lonely.
30. Even in marriage everyone has to look out for themselves.
31. Sex with my spouse has never been as exciting as in my fantasies.
32. I really don't think that I am very good at most things.
33. My spouse frequently helps when I am doing an unpleasant chore.
34. When all the relatives get together, I feel awkward and uncomfortable.
35. I enjoy sharing my feelings with my spouse.
36. My marriage is not a perfect success.
37. Yelling and screaming play no part in our attempts to resolve our conflict.
38. I often tell my spouse I love him/her.
39. When one gets married it's forever.
40. Our personal closeness is the major determinant of how satisfactory our sexual relationship is.
41. I feel that I am the person I would like to be.
42. My spouse and I share the same goals in life.
43. We are lucky we have relatives to whom we can go for help.
44. I always try to give my spouse my full attention when he/she is talking to me.
45. My marriage could be happier than it is.
46. When there is a difference of opinion, we tend to negotiate a resolution rather than fight.
47. We always do something special on our anniversary.
48. In our marriage we try to live by the principle "all for one and one for all".
49. Our sexual relationship decreases my frustrations.
50. I am embarrassed when I am the centre of attention.
51. My spouse and I like to do things for self-improvement together.
52. It is a real effort for me to try and get along with my spouses' parents.
53. I often read the newspaper or watch TV when my spouse is trying to talk to me.
54. I have never regretted my marriage, not even for a moment.
55. I never hit below the belt when we argue.
56. I will never use my love for my spouse as a way to hurt him/her.
57. I am not prepared to put up with my spouses' annoying habits.

58. My marriage could not possibly be happy without a satisfactory sex life.
59. When I compare myself to most other people I like myself.
60. My spouse and I have worked out the male/female household roles to both satisfaction.
61. I feel that my parents interfere in our relationship.
62. I would lie to my spouse if I thought it would keep the peace.
63. I don't think that anyone could possibly be happier than my mate and I when we are with one another.
64. When we have differences of opinion my spouse never walks out of the house.
65. I am often unfriendly towards my spouse.
66. I don't really care whether my spouse supports me or not, just as long as he/she lets me lead my own life.
67. I always seem to be in the mood for sex when my spouse is.
68. I am sometimes afraid that people will see a part of me that I am not aware of.
69. My spouse did not try to make me change after we got married.
70. Family reunions are one highlight of our social life.
71. My personal secrets would hurt my spouse.
72. There are times when I do not feel a great deal of love and affection for my spouse.
73. During our arguments I never try to depreciate my spouse's point of view.
74. Love is being able to say you're sorry.
75. I would be willing to compromise my beliefs to make our marriage better.
76. My spouse rarely turns away from my sexual advances.
77. There are many aspects of my personality that I do not like.
78. I found it difficult to make changes in my lifestyle after we got married.
79. Our children interfere with the time we have together.
80. I can say anything I want to my spouse.
81. There are some things about my mate that I do not like.
82. Sometimes I think all we ever do is argue.
83. Buying gifts shows my affection for my spouse.
84. Most of the time at home I feel like I'm just killing time.
85. Our sexual relationship influences our level of closeness.
86. Other people usually have more to offer in a conversation than I do.
87. My spouse's sociability adds a positive aspect to our relationship.
88. Our marriage would be better if our parents did not meddle in our problems.
89. I always take time to listen to my spouse.
90. Every new thing I have learned about my mate has pleased me.

Section Three: Critique

There are several weaknesses in the questionnaire:

1/ Some questions are too absolute:

eg. "Differences of opinion never lead to verbal abuse." Can a couple only rate themselves good at conflict resolution if they NEVER get in the least abusive?

A further eg: "I always kiss my spouse goodbye." One could argue that a couple are more genuinely affectionate if they occasionally don't kiss when not feeling particularly warm towards each other.

2/ Some questions could be indications of something quite different than the component they are intended to measure:

eg. in the cohesion component- "I am always at my best when we are together."
" A no answer may indicate someone who shines professionally or particularly enjoys a special interest rather than be an indication of lack of cohesion.

3/ Some questions have inappropriate wording: (perhaps this is cultural?)

eg. "Without my marriage my life would lack meaning." would be better as "Without my marriage my life would have less meaning." One can be committed to a marriage and not believe their life would be devoid of meaning without it.

4/ Some questions are mystifying:

eg. Why should a 'true' response to : "I found it difficult to make changes in my lifestyle after we got married." necessarily be an indication of lack of compatibility? Is Waring suggesting that compatible partners must be naturally so from the beginning of their relationship? Ditto a false response to: " My spouse's sociability adds a positive aspect to our relationship." In a situation where neither partner is sociable they may be very compatible. Couples could also be very compatible in many areas of their lives other than their ability to be sociable.

5/ The questionable rationale of the autonomy component seems to be based on the belief that people who are comfortable with their in-laws, enjoy their company and appreciate their advice are more independent than those who don't!

It is surely a simplistic approach to assume that antagonism to in-laws is a sign of lack of autonomy; amongst other factors this omits consideration of the nature of the in-laws.

6/ Some components have more I related questions, others have more we related questions. Consequently it is unclear whether the final score in any facet reflects each individual's perception of the relationship or of themselves.

7/ The autonomy component treats the couple as a unit and looks at their autonomy from children and families of origin rather than looking at individual autonomy within the relationship. Given indications of the importance of identity development in order to not lose oneself in a relationship, a measure of individual autonomy would perhaps have been more useful.

Section Four: Types of marital intimacy.

From a randomly selected sample of the general population Waring, Patton, Neron and Linker (1986) operationally defined four types of marital intimacy:

1/ Optimal Intimacy- score 25-40 on total intimacy, average subscale profile consistency and desirability less than or equal to 6.

2/ Pseudo intimacy- total intimacy score greater than 20, high subscale profile consistency and social desirability greater than 6.

3/ Average intimacy- total intimacy 20-24, subscale inconsistency and social desirability less than 6.

4/ Deficient or absent intimacy- total intimacy under 20, low subscale consistency and low desirability.

Section Five: Importance Rating Scale

This rating scale was put together by the researcher to gather further information on participants' values as regards the components of the Waring Intimacy Questionnaire:

Previously you filled out a Waring Intimacy Questionnaire which asked about how things are in your relationship; now I want to know about how **important** each component of intimacy is to you personally and why it is important. Below are descriptions of each of the facets of intimacy identified by Waring; please give them a score from 0-10 according to this scale:

0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Not important			Moderately				Extremely			
at all.			important				important			
1/ Conflict resolution: resolving differences of opinion.										—
2/ Affection: expressing feelings of emotional closeness.										—
3/ Cohesion: being committed to your relationship.										—
4/ Sexuality: communicating and meeting your sexual needs in your relationship.										—
5/ Identity: level of self confidence and self esteem.										—
6/ Compatibility: being able to work and play together comfortably.										—
7/ Expressiveness: sharing thoughts, beliefs and feelings with your partner.										—
8/ Autonomy: being independent from your family of origin and your children.										—