



# secrets of sex & marriage

## 7 Groundbreaking Findings that Make all the Difference

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The constant friction of moving parts would destroy a car engine without oil. In many ways, just as oil is the lubricant of an engine, the sexual relationship is the lubricant of a marriage. It helps diminish friction and creates a protective sense of togetherness. The causes of friction still exist (two different people doing life together), but the sexual relationship ideally helps buffer the rough edges.

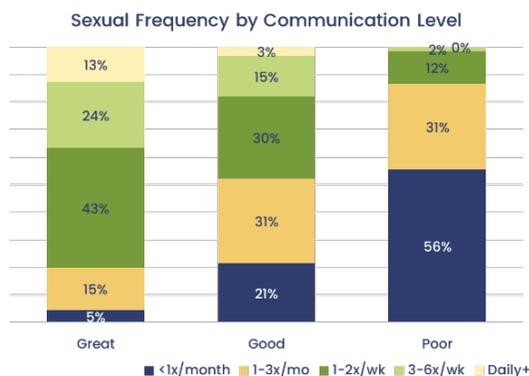
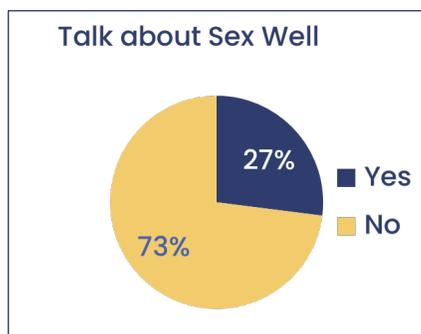
The problem, of course, is that in many marriages the sexual relationship doesn't act like a lubricant, because it is itself a cause for distress. Sex (like money) is one of the most common marriage issues, responsible for much pain, dissatisfaction or distance. (For example, three out of four couples have a mismatch on frequency.) But it doesn't have to be that way. Sex can provide an unrivaled opportunity to come together and create real, lasting oneness and intimacy *once we understand the factors that matter for ourselves and our spouse*. This research identifies some of the most crucial factors.

### Research process

As with all previous research-based books, our approach is to uncover facts that matter but haven't been well-understood or quantified before. For *Secrets of Sex & Marriage*, our samples include interviews and surveys with more than 4,000 subjects, including one nationally-representative "matched pair" survey of 501 couples, another nationally-representative survey of 1,097 individuals, a survey of more than 800 Christian counselors and therapists, and several other surveys.

### Sneak Peek at a Few Initial Findings (All analysis is in draft form only.)

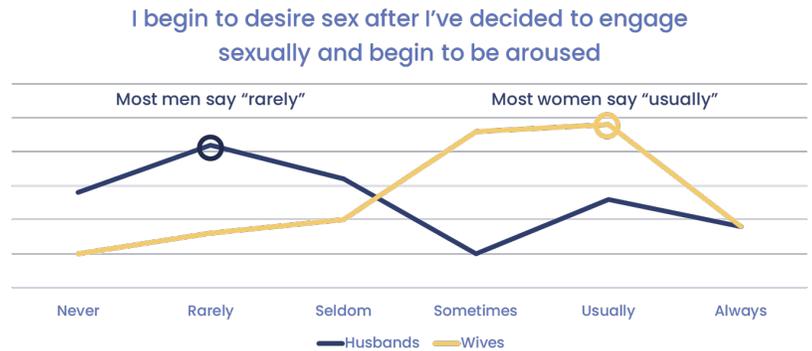
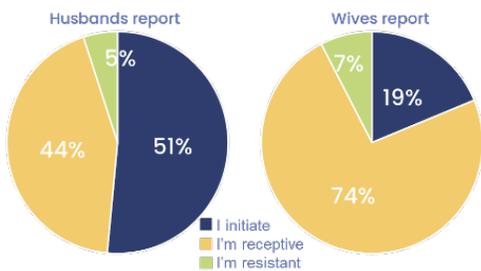
- **Couples don't talk about sex well – but they need to.** It appears that only 27% of couples talk about sex well. 73% do not. And yet communication seems to be very tied to sexual satisfaction and frequency. 80% of couples with great communication have sex once a week or more versus only 14% of those who have poor communication. Similarly, 56% of couples with poor communication are in sexless marriages (defined as less than once per month or never) versus only 5% who are great communicators.



- **On average, both higher-desire and lower-desire spouses want more sex than they are getting.** This usually surprises the higher-desire spouse. But it means most couples can get on the same side of the table to understand what is hindering what they *both* want.



- **One common sexual disconnect is a lack of recognition that there are different types of desire.** The cultural portrayal of 'desire' is that healthy sexual desire means desiring sex, getting aroused and pursuing it. Yet this 'Initiating Desire' (which is more common among men) is only one type of desire. 'Receptive Desire' is another type of desire (more common among women), in which the *feeling* of desire arrives *after* sexual activity has started.



## About Us

**Shaunti Feldhahn:** With an analytical graduate degree from Harvard, Shaunti started out on Wall Street before unexpectedly becoming a social researcher and best-selling author. Today, she uses her analytical experience to uncover the little things that make the biggest difference for lives and relationships. Shaunti and her husband, Jeff, live in Atlanta with their two kids and two cats who think they are dogs.

**Dr. Michael Sytsma:** With a Ph.D. specializing in marital and sexual therapy and 35 years of clinical experience, Dr. Mike is a renowned sex therapist and co-founder of the influential Sexual Wholeness, Inc. He directs Building Intimate Marriages, Inc. and is a leader of leaders in this area. Dr. Mike and his wife, Karen, live in the Atlanta area, and are the parents of two adult sons and one soon-to-be daughter-in-law.