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HOW VIRTUES AND VALUES AFFECT
MARITAL INTIMACY

by

Natalie Alexander Stevens

A thesis submitted to the faculty of
Brigham Young University
in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of

Masters of Science

Department of Marriage and Family Therapy

School of Family Life

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BRIGHAM YOUNG UNIVERSITY

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ABSTRACT

THE GOLDEN RULE: HOW VIRTUES AND VALUES AFFECT MARITAL INTIMACY

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Department of Marriage and Family Therapy

Masters of Science

The purpose of this study was to better understand how virtues and values affect marital intimacy. Ten married couples were given a marital satisfaction assessment and participated as individuals in 1-1/2 hour interviews which were audiotaped and then transcribed. Using grounded theory and also the constant comparative method, researchers were able to generate a theory involving a core theme of showing love for self and other, which strongly contributes to increased intimacy. This process is connected to living virtues and to becoming other-oriented. Two different ways of “being” were found to be connected both with showing love, living virtues, increasing intimacy: other-orientation (a focus on the other including her well-being) and self-orientation (a primary concern with meeting one’s own needs and desires above all else). These orientations were connected with secure attachment style and insecure attachment styles, respectively. Secure attachment was connected with sets of beliefs and thoughts,

affect, and behavior characteristic of this way of being that increase security in the relationship. Orientation and attachment style, whether other-oriented and secure or self-oriented and insecure, seemed to be mutually determining. A Virtue Cycle connected with these processes was described, in which one who lives virtues genuinely towards their partner often experiences an increased love for their partner and closeness in the relationship. The receiver often perceives virtuous actions given by her partner to be a sign of his love for her, which leads to feeling loved and feeling closer, and wanting to give to partner which leads her to increase her living of virtues, increasing her other-orientation. Living of virtues was generally associated with increased intimacy for both Other-oriented and Self-oriented couples, though increases were greater and more lasting in Other-oriented (OO) couples. Implications are discussed.

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become great friends to me. I am grateful for my clients who have taught me so many things and touched my life. I also especially thank the research participants who were willing to spend time and energy sharing their views and experiences of marital intimacy.

I have included two quotes that readers will find to be connected with my study's findings. I have included them here because I am thankful to the Lord for the truth which he shares with his children through modern revelation.

In *The Teachings of Spencer W. Kimball*, there is a quote by Spencer W. Kimball who explained eloquently:

The love of which the Lord speaks is not only physical attraction, but also faith, confidence, understanding, and partnership. It is devotion and companionship, parenthood, common ideals and standards. It is cleanliness of life and sacrifice and unselfishness. This kind of love never tires nor wanes. It lives on through sickness and sorrow, through prosperity and privation, through accomplishment and disappointment, through time and eternity (1982, p. 248).

Gordon B. Hinckley's statement echoes the importance of such true love:

I lift a warning voice to our people. We have moved too far toward the mainstream of society in this matter. Now, of course, there are good families. There are good families everywhere. But there are too many who are in trouble. This is a malady with a cure. The prescription is simple and wonderfully effective. It is love. It is plain, simple, everyday love and respect. It is a tender plant that needs nurturing. But it is worth all of the effort we can put into it (*Ensign*, Nov. 1997, p. 69).

I feel that my Heavenly Father has helped me in every way and is the source of inspiration and strength for the good things I have been able to do in this research and in my professional and personal life.

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Chapter I: Introduction, Review of Literature, Statement of the Problem

Overall, mental health workers, the general public, and the media greatly agree that a successful marriage involves self-disclosure, understanding, caring, and emotional intimacy (Fowers, 2001a & 2001b; Wallerstein & Blakeslee, 1995; Bellah, Madsen, Sullivan, Swidler, & Tipton, 1985). Further, most professional effort aimed at helping couples achieve these things is of a technical nature, for example: teaching communication skills to increase intimacy (Fowers, 2001b). Yet personal maturity is viewed by some to be more fundamental to an intimate relationship than exercising technical skills (Gurman & Kniskern, 1979; Fowers, 2001b). Such maturity is associated with consistently practicing virtues like generosity and honesty (2001b). Viewing mental health to be a value-free domain may have contributed to professionals neglecting the importance of values and virtues important in marital relationships. Recently, mental health professionals have discussed the influence of virtues and values on therapy, theory, and research (2001b; Bellah et al., 1985; Slife & Williams, 1995).

More research is needed to identify how virtues and values affect marital intimacy. The intent of this study is to create a theory, grounded in couples' experience, which explains the relationship between these three variables. Such a theory could clarify conceptualization of virtues and values in relation to intimacy and thus contribute to better research in this area. Such clarification might also shed light on possibilities for therapeutic and self-help work dealing with marital intimacy.

Review of Literature

Intimacy is generally viewed as an essential part of a relationship. In a widespread theory it is said to be part of consummate love, the most whole type of love, which also includes commitment and passion (Sternberg, 1986). What exactly does intimacy mean? Intimacy has been difficult to define, possibly because there are so many components involved with this construct. Though there is not a general consensus on a single definition of intimacy, there are some common components of intimacy (Harper & Elliott, 1988; Van den Broucke, Vandereycken, & Vertommen, 1995).

Most authors agree that intimacy involves attending and responding to both self and other (Harper & Elliott, 1988). Many also agree that intimacy involves mutuality (Moss & Schwebel, 1993). While one can be in love without the other reciprocating, one cannot be intimate with another without mutual interaction (1993). Sharing selves with each other through self-disclosure in a way that increases feelings of closeness is an integral part of intimacy (Harper & Elliott, 1988; Van den Broucke et al., 1995). Couples share themselves through self-disclosure by exchanging emotional and cognitive information (which includes perceptions and intuitions) and personal experiences (Harper & Elliott, 1988). Closeness involves “awareness” of a partner’s affective “world” and partner “exchanges” of such information (Moss & Schwebel, 1993, p. 33).

The quality of self-disclosure is of great import. Some factors affecting a disclosure’s quality are intent, meaning and frequency of the disclosure, and commitment in the relationship (Harper & Elliott, 1988). Undiscriminating openness, like sharing negative information about one’s spouse with him, for example, does not generally increase intimacy (1988; Van den Broucke et al., 1995, Gilbert, 1976). Van den Broucke et al.

(1995) explain that along with self-disclosure usually comes greater fondness of and less doubt about the other. This increases trust while decreasing insecurity (1995). Through intimacy, secure bonds and attachments are strengthened (Johnson, 1996).

Some of the different domains in which sharing may occur are “sexual, emotional, social, intellectual, recreational, spiritual, physical, and crisis,” (Harper & Elliott 1988, p. 352). Thus each of these domains encompasses its respective subtype of intimacy. For example, recreational intimacy deals with closeness involved in sharing recreational activities. Overall intimacy is influenced by each type of intimacy including emotional, mental and physical intimacy (Moss & Schwebel, 1993). It has been found that problems with sexual intimacy especially affect a couple’s ability to be close in other areas (Moore, McCabe, & Stockdale, 1998).

Some of the specific aspects of intimacy that have been proposed are conflict resolution- resolution of differences; affection- the expression of intimate feelings; cohesion- feelings of dedication to the relationship; sexuality- the expression and realization of sexual needs; identity- couple self-confidence and self-esteem; compatibility- ability to “comfortably work and play together;” autonomy- couple independence from others; expressiveness- sharing of thoughts, beliefs, etc.; and desirability- responding “desirably” (Waring, Tillman, Frelick, Russell, & Weisz, 1980; Waring & Reddon, 1983, p. 54; Harper & Elliott, 1988; Waring & Chelune, 1983).

Both autonomy and cohesion are important for intimacy (Minuchin & Fishman, 1981; Olson, Russell, & Sprenkle, 1983; Lerner, 2001; Waring & Reddon, 1983). Building a sense of “we,” a shared identity, is part of what helps a couple feel secure (Wallerstein & Blakeslee, 1995). Also, partners who can share “an overall sense of

belonging to something together” are better able to commit to one another and make sacrifices for the marriage (1995, p. 68). Belonging and togetherness can help to increase intimacy (1995). Indeed, closeness is the central concept of the definition of intimacy (Sternberg, 1997; Moss & Schwebel, 1993).

Making room for each partner’s individuality is also important (Wallerstein & Blakeslee, 1995). Sharing one’s self with another requires self-awareness, which involves a sense of individuality (Lerner, 2001; Bellah, Madsen, Sullivan, Swidler, & Tipton, 1985). Partners each have differences and generally make space for one another’s unique existence to some extent (Wallerstein & Blakeslee, 1995; Maturana, 1992). Spouses often learn the importance of being themselves in marriage (Wallerstein & Blakeslee, 1995). One author mentions she learned a lot about herself by seeing ways in which she differed from her husband (1995). This is one way to learn about one’s own identity, though the interactions of the relationship may lead partners to altar their identities (Wallerstein & Blakeslee, 1995; Maturana, 1992). Each partner is in a “continuous” process of “reshap[ing] their identity so it continues to express what they want as a couple and what they need as individuals,” (Wallerstein & Blakeslee, 1995, p. 68). Thus in relating and in being intimate, togetherness and separateness are both relevant concepts.

Furthermore, people differ in their view of the ideal level of closeness (Harper & Elliott, 1988). It has been found that it is not the actual level of intimacy that is predictive of marital adjustment but rather the difference between the desired and actual levels of intimacy. When this discrepancy is greater, marital adjustment is worse, especially for women. Couples can have good marital adjustment with less intimacy so

long as they do not desire more (1988). When partners are unable to predict each other's level of perceived intimacy, they often differ in their experience of closeness. Such couples report a lesser amount of intimacy than others (Heller & Wood, 1998).

Value Judgments

Value judgments likely influence intimacy because what spouses value, including intimacy itself, affects how they will experience intimacy (Harper & Elliott, 1998; Wincze & Carey, 2001). Value judgments deal with morality. They are evaluations of the degree of positive or negative relevance to a person's goals that something has, as judged by the object of evaluation's ability to help or hinder the achievement of these goals (Thomas, 1998). Different things have different worth to a person's goals. People do not see every person, situation and thing as having equal worth. Because some things are seen as more valuable according to a moral value system, the value people can give to objects, situations, ideals, etc., allows for different judgments based on their purposes. One way to evaluate something's worth is through emotion, which is also an important part of intimacy (Johnson, 1996).

The morally-relevant is that which deals with a thing's worth in furthering human well-being (Audi, 1995). Human well-being is rather general. Some argue that this goal is to be met through seeking pleasure for one's self while others argue that well-being lies rather in furthering the good of all mankind (Audi, 1995). How one defines human well-being will lead to what one's purposes are and thus to what things are of most worth in achieving those purposes. Thus, value judgments are morally-relevant as they are evaluations of how important something is to one's goals. It must be noted that there is a difference between morally-relevant acts and morally right acts. The committing of

murder is a morally-relevant, though not morally right, act. Stating that value judgments are morally-relevant or a matter of morality simply means that they pertain to morality, without making a judgment of whether or not any given value judgment is morally right. Yet, any morally-relevant act can be praised or blamed based on the rightness or wrongness of the act, according to its judger.

Spouses hold value judgments about the importance of intimacy in meeting their goals. Fowers argues that over-valuing emotional intimacy may cause problems in a couple's relationship because such an overemphasis may lead spouses to blame the other or feel depressed about their marriage, actually making it more difficult to be truly intimate (2001a; 2001b). It is expected that other values are also important in one's experience of intimacy.

Virtues

Virtues involve characteristic ways of acting for a greater purpose, "a higher good" (Fowers, 2001b, p. 334; Broadie, 1991). Fowers defines virtues as "the personal qualities or character strengths...that make it possible for persons to live a good or worthwhile life," based on Aristotelian ethics (2001b, p. 328). Some examples include the virtue of generosity, of honesty, and the virtue of courage (2001b). Virtues are essentially a mean in relation to circumstances that encourage different emotions; for example a situation may encourage either fear or confidence, when speaking of courage. Courage is to do or endure something "because it is noble to do so, or because it is base not to do so," (Aristotle, 2000, p. 31). Thus, to live a virtue is to put a personal quality into play in an appropriate manner for a given situation. These virtues seem intuitively to be a part of marital intimacy where such things as honesty, kindness, and courage to be

open seem to greatly contribute to self-disclosure, trust and other processes and components of intimacy.

Aristotle writes that “nothing that exists by nature can form a habit contrary to its nature,” (2000, p. 20). He explains how a rock that by nature “moves downwards” cannot be trained to “move upwards,” nor “can anything else that by nature behaves in one way be trained to behave in another,” (pp. 20-21). If it were human nature to act virtuously, then we could not be trained to act contrary to this nature. Yet, because we are able to act morally or immorally, and are thus capable of moral training, Aristotle concludes that we are not by nature determined in matters of morality. We have the possibility of choosing our behavior, leading to the realization of moral agency. The rock, on the other hand, is determined by the necessity of nature. It cannot choose to behave otherwise, whereas we are able to make choices in matters of morality because our nature does not determine our moral behavior. Thus, “moral virtue comes about as a result of habit” (p. 13), and this habit of moral virtue is formed as we consistently choose to behave certain ways according to our values. Virtues seem to be formed by individual choice. This ability to choose is often referred to as personal agency, showing how individual responsibility for choices is emphasized in our language. Yet, these choices are made in the context of relationships. Merriam & Yang (1996) found that personal agency (internal locus of control) is positively correlated with marriage. These authors mention that not only is a sense of agency required to choose to enter a marriage, but also that the experience of marriage offers certain opportunities to further develop agency (1996). Thus, virtues, as choices of morality are developed in a relationship and grow

within that relationship. I further propose that living virtues may contribute to satisfying intimacy in marriage relationships.

Aristotle explains that the habits formed by our patterns of morally-relevant behavior are integral to the formation of our characters (2000). He describes, “men will be good or bad builders as a result of building well or badly,” (p. 21). Aristotle writes how “the same [principle] is true of appetites and feelings of anger; some men become temperate and good-tempered, others self-indulgent and irascible, by behaving in one way or the other in the appropriate circumstances,” (p. 21). Thus, one may attain a good-tempered disposition by responding with an appropriate emotion in situations that are relevant to the emotion of anger. Our choices affect our dispositions, which dispositions then affect our choices. Dispositions can be defined as the combination of an object’s characteristics (including virtues), which influence it to act in a certain way (Hughes, 2001).

Hughes explains how one of glass’s properties, brittleness, causes it to break when dropped (2001). Likewise, a person has certain characteristics of her personality (virtues) that influence her actions. These virtues make up her disposition. For example, let’s suppose a certain lady feels and acts generously on a regular basis. Some may say she has a giving nature or disposition based on this pattern of her emotion and behavior. She will usually act in a manner characteristic of her, which is consistent with her disposition. Someone who is not generous would not consistently feel and act in a generous manner.

The emotions one has and the actions one performs (often influenced by one’s emotions) build one’s disposition when consistently performed. This lady has formed a

generous disposition through regularly feeling and acting generously. Thus, an observer of the generous lady may conclude from her emotion, and virtuous actions relevant to that emotion, that she has a generous disposition. Emotions and actions inspired by them, including virtues, are thus reflections of one's disposition. This is one of the reasons why they are subject to moral judgment. Hughes writes "the choices we make usually (though not on every occasion) do express the characters we have, for better or for worse," (2001, p. 69).

Because one helps to construct his disposition through the choices he makes within his environmental and physiological context, agency is involved. This leads to direct and sometimes indirect control of behavior, as we have responsibility in helping to create the disposition responsible for our behavior. Using Aristotle's example, one who has become a good builder will consequently build well. Aristotle ties this principle back to emotional behavior, writing that "by being habituated to despise things that are terrible and to stand our ground against them we become brave, and it is when we have become so that we shall be most able to stand our ground against them," (p. 23). By making the choices to help create brave dispositions, we then have greater ability to behave bravely in situations. The choices one makes earlier in one's life determines one's character, which character then affects one's morally-relevant behavior, including virtues.

Virtues, along with their sister concept, disposition, may affect the ability to feel close in a relationship. Commitment affects intimacy and has even been referred to as the "foundation" necessary for the growth of intimacy's other components (Moss & Schwebel, 1993, p. 33). Other virtues like selflessness and courage have been mentioned as important to intimacy in marriage (Wallerstein & Blakeslee, 1995). Courage and trust

are requisite for self-disclosure (Fowers, 2001a & 2001b) which is viewed as a fundamental component of intimacy.

Virtues and values seem to contribute to marital intimacy, however there are no known studies rigorously examining how these things affect intimacy. The purpose of this study is to assess, through qualitative methods, how values and virtues affect marital intimacy. Such knowledge will be helpful in guiding further research and intervention in the area of marital intimacy.

Chapter II: Methodology

Design

The study was conducted based on a qualitative design. Qualitative research was first used in anthropology and sociology (Denzin & Lincoln 1994, 1; Moon, Dillon, & Sprenkle, 1990, 357). It is a type of methodology in which research is conducted in order to gain an understanding of an experience/phenomenon in the context in which it occurs from the perspective of those involved with it (Moon et al., 1990, 358). Some assumptions of qualitative research are that: process is primary; people make meaning of different things; participants' natural settings are the best context in which to gather information; the researcher, as the data collector and analyzer and one who holds certain values, is recognized as a part of the research process; the researcher cannot get outside of what she is studying; and obviously the researcher gathers and analyzes qualitative, descriptive data (pictures and explanations) rather than quantitative, numerical data. Conceptualizations, hypotheses, and theories are inductively formed as a result of the data analysis rather than before data is analyzed (Merriam, 1988, p. 19). *Grounded*

Theory Design

Grounded theory is an overarching type of methodology through which theories are developed based on data grounded in data (explanations or samples of the participants' experiences). This data is gathered and analyzed in a set manner (Glaser, 1978; Glaser & Strauss, 1967; Strauss & Corbin, 1990). Grounded theory was developed by sociologists Glaser and Strauss (1967) to logically join theory and research together without metaphorically cramming data into a Procrustean bed. It was first presented in their book *The Discovery of Grounded Theory* (Glaser and Strauss, 1967). It has since

been used in “anthropology, psychology, social work, nursing and education” (Strauss & Corbin, 1994 as cited by Cobb, 2001).

As data from each round is compared to earlier rounds, the research question naturally grows and changes to encompass the emerging information and theory. This allows current discoveries to guide the direction and possibilities of the research (Robrecht, 1995; Strauss, & Corbin, 1990). Therefore, theory does indeed develop from data (Glaser, 1978). The emerging theory also develops *with* the data: growing, changing and even shedding what no longer makes sense in order to best explain both recently and previously gathered data (Strauss & Corbin, 1990). Theory is thus able to flexibly cover information gained at any point in the research process (Glaser, 1978, p. 4; Robrecht, 1995).

The grounded theory methodology allows researchers to systematically gather information gained based on the participants’ perspectives, and analyze the data comparatively with the purpose of fitting theory to data. Because the grounded theory methodology allows researchers to analyze dense and complex connections between people and phenomena, it enables researchers to study circular interaction processes (central to systemic research) and the inner and outer influences which affect those processes (Strauss & Corbin, 1994). Due to the grounded theory being so well-suited to study human interaction and form theory and due to the novelty of my study, this methodology matches well in the discovery of how virtues and values affects marital intimacy according to couples throughout the lifespan. Asking open-ended questions to obtain data with which we can then form a theory will allow a theory to emerge based on this data drawn from experiences of those involved with the phenomenon. This is an

ideal place to begin formulating a theory of how values and virtues affect intimacy in marriage.

Researchers' Influence on Collection and Analysis

While many think that the “objective researcher” is possible, arguments are being made that this is an illusion. Even placing objectivity and neutrality of values as important is a value and bias (Slife, 1995). Still, Glaser argues that grounded theory researchers are best able to respond to the data as it is by beginning the study with the least amount of assumptions about the subject as possible (Glaser, 1978, p. 3). This is not really about being objective, but about being open and sensitive to the data. Qualitative researchers are encouraged to acknowledge what their influences, assumptions and biases are as far as they are aware so that consumers of the research are able to critically analyze it in light of the researchers' contributions to it (Locke, Spirduso & Silverman, 1987, as cited in Creswell, 1994, p. 147). Thus I have outlined before beginning data collection, some assumptions that could affect this research project.

My assumptions:

1. The purposes of marriage are to provide a context for growth and trust, to enjoy another person, and to share a life together, including common values, projects, purposes, and experiences. Secure attachment is important for a marriage, but can be used by some to justify fulfilling individual needs. The concept is very useful, though, when viewed from a relational orientation.
2. I believe in a continuum running from individualistic to relational orientations towards marriage. The more relationally oriented one is, the more satisfied she will be in marriage.
3. Expecting one's partner to satisfy and fulfill one emotionally and otherwise places great pressure on the partner and relationship and makes it difficult to be happy in a relationship, as it leads to viewing one's partner in terms of what the partner can do for the self thus blinding one from the partner's complete self.
 - a. Partners' perceptions of the purpose of marriage will affect what they value in marriage.

4. These assumptions are in large part based on Fowers' (2001a) book *Beyond the myth of marital happiness: how embracing the virtues of loyalty, generosity, justice, and courage can strengthen your relationship* and Susan Johnson's writings on Emotionally Focused Therapy (1996).
5. Post-modern thought influences my preference for qualitative research, in that it holds that each person's view of reality has validity.
6. Also, I believe that couples are experts of their relationships.

Working with a Team

Each person brings his own style, life experience, strengths and limitations to the research process (Gilgun, 1992, p. 24). Alone, a person may be affected by others' narratives in a way which influences information collection so that it is done more to quench the researcher's personal curiosity than to follow through with the proposed nature of inquiry (Daly, 1992). Also, the researcher may get stuck in a limiting perspective of what the data means (Glaser, 1978). With the vast amount of information typically gathered in qualitative research, it is very possible for a single researcher to overlook something significant, to ignore what he is not looking for or to place too much importance on "first impressions or dramatic incidents" (Cobb, 2001, p. 57; Huberman & Miles, 1994).

Working with a research team in critically evaluating one another's contributions (positive and negative) allows researchers to reduce the amount of bias which would result from having only one person collect, analyze and interpret all of the data (Glaser, 1978). It also guards against a narrow view of the meaning of the data as multiple perspectives are able to interpret what the data might mean (Huberman & Miles, 1994). Further, as many people discuss the data and the research process, new ideas are generated which lend to the possibility for a more comprehensive study with better quality (Glaser, 1978). Collaborative work thus fortifies the researchers against

unknowingly projecting their own meanings onto the data which should ideally allow a clearer window into meaning according to participants (Daly, 1992).

Procedures

Sampling Procedures

Couples were selected on a volunteer basis. Interviews were advertised in many ways. First, flyers (see Appendix A) were posted on a board in the University's student activities center and distributed to a few Marriage and Family classes. Second, a few students recruited couples who they knew to participate; one couple was non-clinical and the other two were attending therapy at the BYU Comprehensive Clinic. Third, an advertisement was run for one week in a local newspaper, the Daily Herald (see Appendix B).

We sampled until variety in levels of intimacy and in values were attained. Couples were compensated with extra credit and \$25 (\$12.50 per individual) or only money for those who were not in school. If extra credit was offered for participation in this research, the professor also offered other opportunities for extra credit. Ten married couples were interviewed, at which point saturation in the interviews became apparent (no new themes were emerging). While some couples were recruited simultaneously (surrounding the beginning of the study), interviews were conducted in a more spread out, ongoing manner. This allowed us to compare and contrast newly gained information with data collected previously. Further, it enabled us to improve the research process as time went on. There were initially no specifications which might exclude someone from the study besides being married.

Data Collection

I explained to the couples that I would be interviewing them to try to understand some of their views of the purpose of marriage and values they hold important for this relationship. I contacted couples to set up an appointment at a time convenient for them. Interviews were conducted based on a semi-structured interview protocol (see Appendixes G and H). The original protocol was revised after the first three interviews to better investigate themes that had begun to emerge. All interviews were between one and two hours long. Interviews were conducted in therapy rooms at the BYU Comprehensive Clinic in order to reduce distractions. Data was collected between August of 2004 and May of 2005.

Measures

Basic demographic information was obtained from each individual in order to better assess this sample and its characteristics which may be helpful in comparing it to the greater population (see Appendix F). Also, each spouse filled out the Revised Dyadic Adjustment Scale, a commonly used marital adjustment measurement (Busby, Christensen, Crane, & Larson, 1995). This measure of relationship satisfaction was used simply to provide a quantitative measurement of spouse's overall satisfaction with their relationship. The scale consists of 14 items that measure couple agreement on decisions and appropriate behavior, marital satisfaction, and marital cohesion (how often the couple shares ideas and activities) based on each spouse's report. RDAS scores in the general population range from 0-69, with distressed couples averaging 41.6 and non-distressed averaging 52.3. The instrument has high internal consistency (alpha coefficient = 0.90) and construct validity (Busby, et al., 1995). A semi-structured protocol was developed by the primary researcher aimed to obtain rich descriptions of spouses' experiences and

beliefs surrounding intimacy, virtues, values and relationships among the variables. The Virtues and Values Scales (Appendix D) were designed after the third interview, as the research team extracted commonly mentioned virtues and values from transcriptions to create a scale. This scale provided us with information about the relative importance for marriage each spouse placed on specific virtues and values, and it also seemed to help spouses better conceptualize the meaning of virtues and values as related to this study.

Process of Interviews

Interviews were conducted with each spouse individually for one hour based on a semi-structured protocol, excepting the first two couples who were interviewed together. After these first interviews, I felt that interviewing spouses separately may allow them a chance to express without restraint. Each spouse in Couples A and B were phoned after the initial interviews in order to afford them a chance to share information that may have been difficult to share in front of their spouses. I also asked them (along with Couple C) in individual phone interviews some questions about themes that had emerged since their original interviews had been conducted. All interviews were audio-taped then transcribed. Through the grounded theory qualitative method, the transcripts were analyzed according to grounded theory and constant comparative analysis procedures for themes, and a theory was developed grounded in the couples' perspectives.

Data Analysis

Concepts and theory were developed through the constant comparative method, in which data from the latest rounds of research were constantly compared to themes and concepts that flowed from and built on data collected and analyzed earlier on (Glaser & Strauss, 1967). Through this constant comparison, expectations of how the concepts and

categories related were explored (Glaser & Strauss, 1967). Hypotheses were generated, tested, and altered (Strauss & Corbin, 1990). The information was viewed in light of all of the components making up the context for the research. This context includes the influence of prior and coexisting variables (Glaser, 1978, 74) and even the role the researcher plays in coevolving the data (Creswell, 1994). Development, branching off, and/or other refinement of the relationships between emerging concepts and categories were evaluated in light of background conditions, including setting and interaction among variables (Strauss & Corbin, 1990). Theory thus accounted for and contained many conceptual connections (Gilgun, 1992) while also serving to acknowledge how these interrelations vary from one another (Strauss & Corbin, 1990)

The data set was made up of transcripts, as well as the audio and video tapes of each interview. With a standard transcription machine, paid transcriptionists transcribed each interview. During data analysis we used Marshall and Rossman's (1989) approach as we 1) sorted information out in a preliminary manner, 2) discovered concepts and themes 3) compared ideas and expectations rising from the data with original and evolving data, 4) looked for other possible theories that might account for the data, and 5) wrote up our findings. Through use of grounded theory process involving open, axial, and selective coding, we created groupings and patterns drawn from the data (Strauss & Corbin, 1990). Lastly, a copy of the Results section was sent to team members who confirmed that results reflected the experiences of participants.

Open coding is a preliminary conceptualization and categorization of ideas and phenomenon discovered in the data. By looking at meaning and symbolism of phenomena described during the interviews, we were able to form early labels for

relevant phenomena and then to group like concepts together. Constant comparison allowed us to continuously analyze and judge each concept in light of the other information gathered and the ensuing themes.

Forming associations between overarching categories and the subcategories they encompass is the work accomplished during axial coding. Expected interrelations of data were tested by constantly comparing categories and relationships found in the data. We tested hypotheses through proving them true or false and through looking for alternative explanations for how concepts might be connected. The relations between categories found again and again were examined as patterns in the phenomena became more apparent and solidified.

Selective coding is the stage in which researchers are able to begin conceptualizing what the core phenomenon is and how it interacts with other categories. The theory began to form as themes central and peripheral joined together to explain the phenomena (Strauss & Corbin, 1990).

Validity of Data

Guba and Lincoln's (1989) standards for measuring the quality of qualitative research are comparative to criteria utilized in quantitative research analysis, such as "internal and external validity, reliability and objectivity" (Cobb, p. 85). Credibility, similar to internal validity, involves how closely the research comes to accurately describing participants' perspectives and realities. We built credibility by reading and re-reading the data over a lengthy period of 9 months. We also shared the progress of our research with colleagues and professors more familiar with qualitative research and

invited feedback. We also increased credibility by making personal assumptions and biases aware prior to conducting data collection.

Transferability, also known as external validity or generalizability, pertains to the amount of relevance the research has to other situations. Though this opportunity is mostly the reader's responsibility, researchers are able to increase the possibility to do this by describing things precisely and giving a sufficiently dense account of the data and its source that the readers may discern whether or not the conclusions drawn may transfer to other contexts (Guba & Lincoln, 1989; Merriam, 1988). We thus gave rich and compact description about anything that we could think of to be helpful and relevant in those trying to generalize. We also pointed out ways which we felt the data could be transferred.

Dependability, similar to reliability, deals with how constant the data is. Will findings last? Can they be replicated? In order to increase dependability, precision should be used to describe processes of data gathering, documentation, and analysis. Further, using several means of data collection increases dependability, which is why other measures were given to participants. Further replication of this study would increase dependability as well.

Participants

The age range for participants was 18-35, with 35% of participants between ages 18-25 and 65% between 26-35. All were married, only one couple had been in a marriage before (both spouses were in their second marriage). Most couples had dated for about a year before marriage, besides one couple who dated for four months and two couples who dated for seven months. Average length of marriage was 3.9 years, ranging

from 5 months to 10 years and a mode of about 1 year (frequency = 5). All couples reported Christianity as their religion, 3 couples reporting decreased involvement in their religion. Two couples had two children, two had 3- 4 children, one had 5-6 children and 50% did not have children. Education level was fairly consistent, with mostly one spouse completing college and the other having some college completed. 10% of participants had only completed high school, and 5% had completed a graduate degree. Reported income ranges were: \$15,000, 20%; \$15,000-29,999, 40 %; \$30,000-44,999 , 30%; and \$45-59,999, 10%. Three couples had one spouse who was not Caucasian: Asian, Japanese/Caucasian, and Hispanic; 85% of participants were Caucasian. Overall, couples shared many similarities.

Interviewer's Impressions of Couples

To offer a fuller picture of the story and theory that emerged, I have provided some basic information about couples interviewed as well as my general impressions of each couple. Couples' names have been changed for this thesis in order to maintain confidentiality.

Couple A. Couple A had been married for 9 years. This was a unique couple. Although they spoke of caring about each other and feeling cared for, they also showed signs of self-orientation at times. The reasons they felt close seemed to be that at critical moments of insecurity in the relationship, at least one of the spouses would become especially other-oriented and work at making the other feel more secure. Nick was quite logical and analytical. He seemed to care a great deal about his wife, but was also very busy and stressed working on career training. Samantha was very articulate, and quick to

understand ideas. She was friendly, but also reported herself to be stubborn. She stayed at home to take care of her children.

Couple B. Tina was very expressive, kind, open and thoughtful. Ryan seemed to be a kind person, but more closed. Through their interaction, she would help him to open up. This couple worked through problems well and often thought about how the other was feeling, though occasionally they would themselves feel hurt.

Couple C. Tom and Angie, though married 1 and a half years, seemed like they had only been married months with the amount of romance and agreement they expressed. Angie seemed to have slightly less power than Tom, him being busier. There were not strong power dynamics in their relationship though. When Angie felt misunderstood by Tom, she would kindly but firmly help him see her view. They did not report many problems, always resolved problems quickly, and felt very close.

Couple D. Shelly was articulate and kind. She had a peaceful feeling about her. Many of her comments dealt with being united. She seemed to be giving and thoughtful by nature, somewhat sensitive and at the same time, strong in communicating her needs and taking an active stance in building the type of relationship she wants.

Greg explained things simply and clearly. He was quite thoughtful of his wife. He seemed to know her well and to be thinking about her. He also admitted that part of doing some things for her makes him feel better about himself as a person and husband. This couple seemed happy in general, yet realistic.

Couple E. Marie was a fiery young woman of Latin American ethnicity. She had strong emotions. She also had a strong logic about her. She, more than anyone, seemed to be aware of and concerned with pragmatics of the relationship: “if it doesn’t feel

good, let's fix it," seemed to be her motto. She seemed very romantic in her expressions, wanting to be with her husband all of the time. At the same time, this came across as dependent and insecure at times, though this judgment is likely influenced by American values of independence.

Spencer expressed being focused on work a great deal. He seemed to care less about the relationship than his wife, who was intensely interested in it and affected by it. He also seemed to struggle to understand his wife and her viewpoint and felt that things might be easier if they were sharing a similar background. This couple did not express a great deal of affection for each other, though Marie did more than Spencer.

Couple F. Meghan seemed to be a very sweet, giving person. At the same time, she showed some characteristics of less satisfied spouses. Part of this could have been a result of her previous marriage, in which her husband had cheated on her multiple times with the same woman. She was able to see in many ways how different John is from her ex-husband, but she reported still being influenced by her past marriage. Sometimes the influence is clear to her like when she is almost expecting for John to not take care of her when she's sick because her ex wouldn't have. It is possible that at other times she is influenced but unaware.

John had a very bright intellect. He was extremely articulate and emotionally expressive. John's explanations showed that religion and being good are important to him, and this came through in how he spoke about his wife and his situations. He spoke kindly of her and took responsibility for what he could do to help his relationship. He explained having felt insecure in the beginning of his marriage, understandably so given that he felt his first wife had intentionally distanced herself from him to be able to justify

divorce. His ex-wife also would pack her belongings and leave during their marriage, which helped him develop what he called the U-Haul Syndrome, a fear of being left. He turned to prayer to find answers for what to do in his current marriage. What he learned was that he needed to love his wife more and not even criticize her in his mind, as he did not criticize her overtly anyhow. He also felt he needed to calm down and not worry so much, but rather focus on helping her to be happy in the relationship. This had aided things greatly and at the time of the interview, they had been enjoying about 3 weeks of more peaceful, happy, and intimate times together. John was also influenced by his past marriage.

Couple G. Amy came across as somewhat timid, very kind, and nonjudgmental. She admitted that sometimes she does judge and does want revenge, which seemed understandable given how mean her husband had been to her. Throughout the interview, she would question her beliefs, such as “Maybe I shouldn’t feel that way.” She seemed insecure, and expressed that she had been insecure earlier in her marriage. She expressed feeling immense shame over spending so much money and over her mistake or deceit (which she didn’t make clear) over winning a sweepstakes. This shame seemed to help her feel like she deserved to be treated poorly. When her husband would tease her about the money, she understood in some ways that it was necessary for him to punish her so she would know how serious her mistake was. This thought was interesting because it seemed to be mostly his thought and belief and she basically adopted it, but would disagree at times, thinking his punishment was extreme or unneeded. I wondered if her timidity let her go along with poor treatment by him for longer than it would have with someone who was more assertive.

Ben reports being less emotional, and less affectionate. Amy wants to be more affectionate than he does usually. He seemed quite masculine. Though he views himself as quiet, he seemed to be an engaging person. At the same time, he reported that he is not very open emotionally and that he withdrew drastically from his wife for a couple months when she helped get them into deep debt (thinking that they would be collecting earnings from a sweepstakes she thought she won) in order to teach her a lesson. During this time he did not talk to her much at all, avoided the family, and spent late nights with friends whom he would both sort through the situation with and complain about Amy to. Eventually, her resolving the problem by figuring out how to pay back the money helped him to trust her again and to come close again, which he wanted to do, but felt he couldn't because such quick forgiveness might not teach her a lesson she needed to learn. He said he likes to tease Amy sometimes about the money problem they had, although this really hurts her and he seemed to know it even before teasing. She has since helped him to stop teasing about that issue. He also will tease her about other girls being attracted to him because this is another area of insecurity for her. He has engaged in some risky behaviors and has run into some trouble with the law early in their marriage, which was difficult for his wife, but she reported she had forgiven him.

Couple H. Jason seemed quite dissatisfied with his marriage. When explaining situations in which he was upset with his wife, he seemed very negative, defensive and blaming. He was able to explain things alright, but was not very articulate.

Emily seemed able to look at herself when asked to, though analyzing situations did not seem something she usually does. During the interview she did not guard herself much, but reported that she usually does, that she hates feeling vulnerable, and that she

has a phobic reaction to confrontation. Conflict for these two was very extreme, with Emily avoiding Jason completely for a few months on two occasions. This was probably the most unsatisfied couple. They also talked the most about divorce and had seriously considered it.

Couple I. Janet seems to be a quiet lady. She explained she has been struggling with depression for a while, but has been coming out of it. She had some dull affect as well as an air of sadness in discussing some of the struggles in her marriage. However, she did brighten up at times, smiling about something funny and possibly enjoying being listened to. She seemed to be frustrated about her husband not opening up with his emotions more. Though she presented to be very reserved, she explained times when this issue will get her yelling and from her report, she gets more animated and involved than her husband most of the time. She reported feeling insecure with her husband in ways because he has chosen and sometimes still does choose his family over her and also he has not made her feel secure financially. This is connected in her mind to the stability of her children's and her own future. She explained things fairly well. I did get the sense interacting with her that in some ways she might be difficult to connect with.

Chris reported being fairly closed with his emotions, as his wife talked about. He did open up somewhat in the interview fairly open and talkative with me. He was very intelligent and articulate. His mood seemed to contain some sadness and dullness. He could not really seem to understand his wife's point of view and seemed somewhat estranged from her feelings on issues which they disagreed. This especially manifested itself when he spoke of his wife feeling upset about his family and his connection with

them. He knew some situations left his wife feeling even traumatized, but did not seem to understand why.

Couple J. Holly was a pleasant woman, but down to earth as well. She seemed quite intelligent and articulate. Her answers were well-thought and parsimonious.

Kent was somewhat slow coming up with answers to questions. He really seemed to think them through and sometimes struggled to do so, granted many of the questions dealt with connections not normally discussed nor considered. He seemed overall kind, content, and simple. He reported thinking through situations and correcting his behavior and attitude, which he does in a practical and constructive manner. With his wife being more adamant and dominant than him, he seems to just do what he can to help her out and accept her requests (which she once stated he has already committed to before he gets a chance to agree) and figures at least her friend's husband is in the same boat he is. He seemed quite peaceful, though he expressed frustration over times when his wife is not satisfied with him. Part of this seemed to be over the criticism in general and part of it seemed to be over wanting to be good enough at disciplining their children and doing other things her way to please her but not knowing how. This couple reported being very satisfied with how close they are.

Though demographics amongst couples were rather similar, the above descriptions help demonstrate the divergence in couples' experiences in their relationship. Examining the transcriptions enabled us to explain more fully couples' experiences and components that contributed to such different experiences.

Chapter III: Results

The units of analysis for this research were interview transcripts. About twenty hours of interviews (one hour each) were transcribed. Analyzing these transcriptions, it became apparent that those who were satisfied with intimacy were oriented in a very different way towards their spouses than those who were not satisfied. Orientation is a fit way to describe experiences affecting intimacy consistently explained by participants. Orientation implies a way of relating, a way of being. The notion of orientation is in line with Aristotle's (2000) view of disposition, though orientations discussed in this paper mostly encompass relational dispositions within the marital relationship as opposed to general dispositions.

Experiences with intimacy were fundamentally tied to either focusing on one's spouse, a phenomenon we titled "other-orientation," or focusing on one's self, "self-orientation." Overall, such orientation seems to flow from the core theme of Consistently Showing Love for Partner and Self, with other-oriented [OO] couples living in accordance with this concept and self-oriented [SO] lacking in consistency in experiencing and demonstrating self-love and love for partner. These differences affect spouses' ability to live virtues. Further, OO couples explained feelings, thoughts, beliefs and actions consistent with a secure style of attachment as opposed to such components being driven by the insecure style of attachment common to SO couples. Thus OO couples lived in an orientation towards their partners that was affected by their secure attachment style. This way of being influenced the manner in which they thought, felt, and acted, which increased both security and intimacy in the relationship. Figure 1

demonstrates these processes, which is titled *the Intimacy Cycle* due to the circular and cyclical nature of these processes.

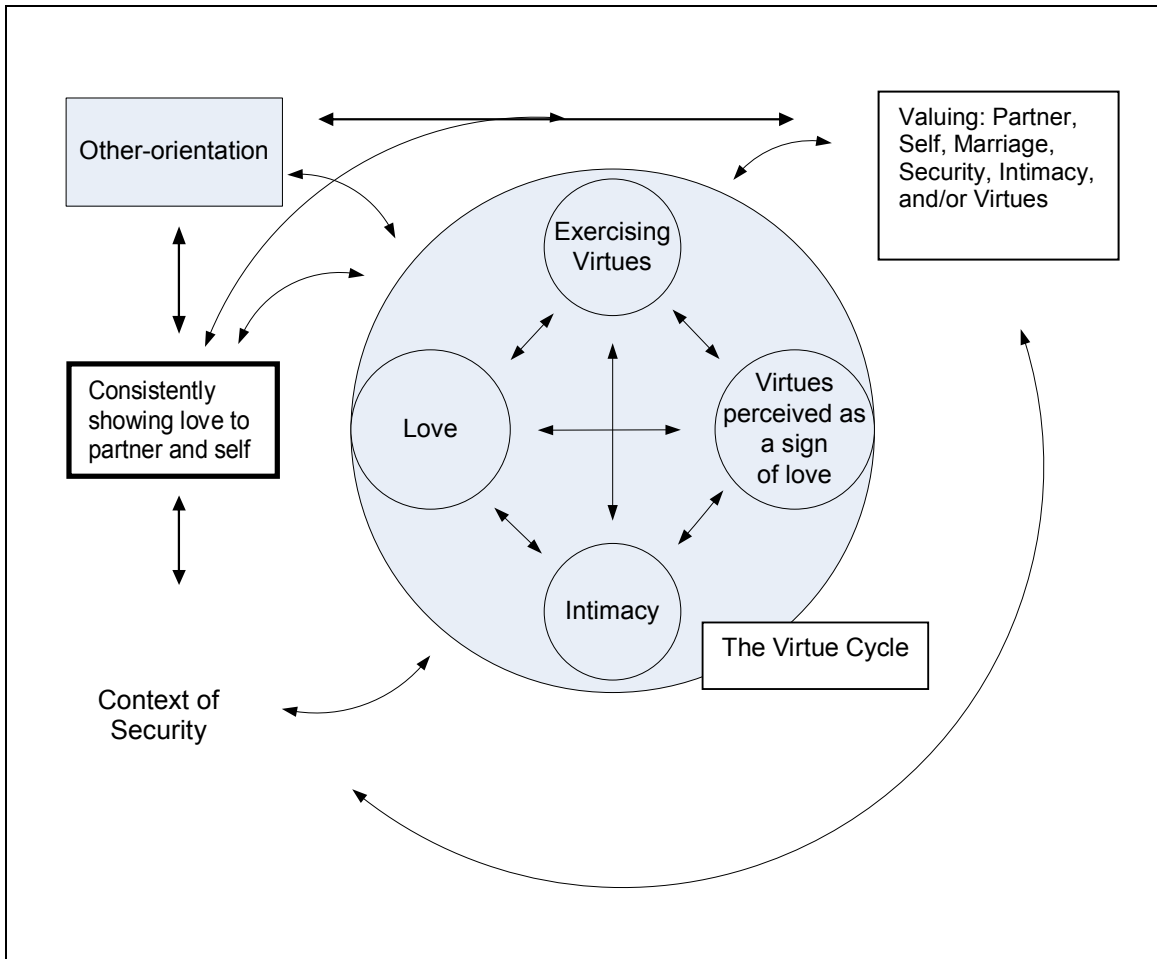


Figure 1. The Intimacy Cycle. The Intimacy Cycle involves mutually determining processes dealing with virtues and values that when combined, lead to increased feelings of love, intimacy and security in the relationship. Consistently Showing Love to Partner and Self is a key component in living the Virtue Cycle, other-orientation and security. Consistently Showing Love helps to perpetuate these same processes which help to create it. For more detailed description of the Virtue Cycle, see Figures 2 and 3.

Initial Themes

During the early rounds of coding, we observed how spouses spoke about virtues and values and their effects on marital intimacy. A category of “virtues important for

intimacy emerged” which included virtues such as kindness, honesty and forgiveness shown in Table 1, *Virtues Important for Intimacy*. Coders also found that one commonality among these virtues was their usefulness in communicating love between spouses. Components of virtues included importance of virtues for marital intimacy, desire to live virtues, and ability to live virtues. A concept of other-orientation also emerged in the early stages of the research. This concept is similar to selflessness, but includes a present yet backstage concern for one’s self while being obviously focused on the other partner. Other-orientation was found to be a sub-theme of virtues in that living virtues helped to communicate a concern for the other. At the same time, looking for relationships between these two variables in the third and fourth transcriptions, suspicions were confirmed that other-orientation (as a way of being) served as roots from which virtues grow. Components of other-orientation include: awareness of the other (especially knowing how the other feels and copes during times of conflict), a desire for the well-being of the other, sacrificing individual desires for the good of the other and of the marriage, forgiving the other, communicating to the other one’s care for them through word and action, thinking of the other, and understanding the other. These components were common themes of spouses’ experiences of intimacy, both in enjoying intimacy and increasing intimacy after distance. Other-orientation seemed to be a core virtue from which other virtues were manifestations of this virtue of caring for the other.

Another theme of security versus insecurity emerged, becoming apparent most clearly when spouses dealt with times of distance. Some spouses spoke of feeling and acting secure in the relationship. Difficulty distracting and soothing themselves during conflict was present for both insecure and secure spouses, but secure spouses maintained

a focus on resolving conflict and helping both partner and self feel loved. A theme of personal agency emerged as spouses explained their ability to distract and soothe themselves and to positively influence their relationship. Insecure spouses spoke of anger and hurt increasing and an inability to affect the situation positively, leading to the theme of agency. Insecure spouses spoke of maintaining their focus on distance and negative emotions and beliefs, like “My spouse doesn’t care about me.” Another theme of insecure husbands in particular dealt with avoiding partner during conflict. Components of insecurity involved lack of safety in relationship, emphasis on acceptance by one’s spouse without expression of self-acceptance, and feeling like spouse does not understand one’s self.

Further study, especially in the transcriptions analyzed later on, led to the realization of pseudo-virtues, which lacked appropriateness for the situation. This became a component of the meaning of virtues, which though noted by the research team, did not seem apparent to many of the participants. Themes that were generated during open coding are as follows:

1. Virtues important for intimacy (See Table 1)
 - a. Importance of living virtues for marital intimacy
 - b. Living virtues
 - c. Desire
 - d. Ability
 - e. Love
 - f. Pseudo virtues
2. Values important for intimacy (See Table 2)
3. Distance
 - a. Dealing with distance
 - i. Distraction
 - ii. Inability to distract
4. Self-orientation and Other-orientation
5. Security and Insecurity
6. Reciprocity

Other-orientation- being focused on each other

- Being supportive
- Commitment
- Compassion
- Courage
- Easygoing
- Faithfulness
- Forgiveness
- Honesty
- Humility- including compromise
- Humor
- Kindness
 - Caring
- Openness
- Respect
- Thoughtfulness
- Trustworthiness

Table 1. Virtues Important for Intimacy. These virtues were initial themes spouses in general felt to be very important for intimacy in marriage.

- Acceptance
 - Validation-feeling that your view is understood and respected
 - Feeling like you can be yourself
- Autonomy
 - Taking care of yourself
- Having things in common:
 - Sharing Religious Beliefs
 - Sharing Backgrounds
 - Sharing Interests
- Communication
- Endurance
- Spending time with each other's immediate family
- Friendship- being friends
 - Playing together
 - Enjoying recreational activities together
 - Knowing each other
 - Knowing what's going on in each other's lives
- Looking forward to your future together
 - Planning your future
 - Holding shared goals
 - Creating something together
 - Anticipating something new and exciting

Table 2. Values Important for Intimacy (Continued on next page).

Happiness
Honesty
Intimacy- feeling close
Feeling close through sharing feelings
Physical intimacy- affection
Sexual intimacy
Feeling close through sharing thoughts
Anticipating closeness
Kindness
Learning
Love
Valuing the marriage
Morality- doing the right thing
Mutuality- each spouse sharing equally with the other
Valuing each other
Feeling safe with each other
Feeling loved by spouse
Feeling connected to each other
Inviting spouse into your world
Being invited into spouse's world
Spending time together
Spending energy on each other
Valuing the positive/ optimism, appreciation
Security
Meeting spouse's needs
Having spouse meet your needs
Support
Encouragement
Uplifting each other
Progression
Trust
Assuming virtuosity in partner. Judging other's intentions to be good.
Being able to be vulnerable.
Unity
Working on the marriage
Communication
Compromise
Endurance
Hard work

Table 2. Values Important for Intimacy. Values couples explained to be important for marital intimacy.

Discovering the presence of pseudo-virtues led me to investigate in more depth spouses' moral reasoning. A system of morality through which spouses made judgments about how to act became apparent. This system of morality affected moral reasoning and thus affected how spouses judged and lived virtues. With pseudo-virtues, for example, sometimes the difficulty in choosing a more appropriate virtue in a situation was due to moral reasoning that the most right thing was to be kind to the other. Such moral reasoning left out the importance of kindness to self and left justice out of the picture. When I began asking spouses about their moral systems, less-satisfied couples valued reciprocation and being treated fairly while couples satisfied with their intimacy explained a theme of other-orientation in explaining that the most right way to treat each other is to think of the other first and try to understand them. The latter group of couples explained more thought processes involving moral reasoning, including situations in which they thought of the importance of commitment or patience during times of conflict. Those less-satisfied explained how this was usually the last thing they thought of. Throughout the study valuing self and valuing other (both pieces of other-orientation) were observed. These valuations were tied to spouses' moral systems. Valuing self especially became apparent when one spouse highly valued acceptance from the other, which was generally accompanied by a theme of low self-acceptance.

Valuing self and valuing other lie on a continuum and were usually not exclusive of each other. As analysis progressed, it became apparent that these values were connected with the system of morality which influenced moral reasoning which influenced living of virtues. Valuing one's self and partner generally involved love and intimacy. This was true in general, though it was found that some valuing involved

anxiety. Feelings of intimacy and love were found to increase valuing the other and the self. New questions were developed to better understand the relationship between love, virtues, and intimacy. Spouses explained that their love often increases as they live virtues. They also explained that when one spouse lives virtues towards the other, the receiving spouse feels loved, which is the reason why virtues draw them close. The theme of reciprocation became apparent as well as patterns and cycles involved in processes of intimacy. Two types of reciprocation were mutuality and equity. Mutuality involved wanting to give one's spouse in order to make him feel as good as he made her feel out of other-orientation and appreciation. Equity had a quality of keeping record and partitioning equal amounts of good and bad for both spouses. Equity was also exercised in order to ward off negativity and blaming from one's spouse. Axial themes involved connecting themes to one another and observing patterns amongst themes and relationships as explained above.

Grouping participants sharing a core commonality together led to the emergence of the core theme, the work of selective coding. Themes from axial and selective coding are outlined on page 36. Couples lacking the context of security reported feeling less intimacy in their marriage and struggled to live virtues. It became apparent that this group varied from the group of more virtuous couples with their background of security mostly on orientation. This variation led to naming each group: couples were categorized as fundamentally other-oriented or self-oriented. Other-oriented couples possessed consistency in showing love through valuing self and other, which manifested itself through their other-orientation and living virtues. This emerged as the core theme of the study. Self-oriented couples were mostly concerned with themselves. Though they did

exercise virtues and other-orientation at times, an other-oriented manner of relating was infrequent and was overruled by negative emotions, thoughts, behavior and experiences in the relationship.

The following themes were generated during axial and selective coding:

A. Intimacy

1. Moral system: the system from which one makes decisions about what is most important, what is right, and how to act
 - i. Governs moral reasoning and behavior
 - ii. Influences emotions and other behavior which influence intimacy
- b. Level of conscious moral reasoning
- c. Consistently Showing Love for Partner and Self
 - i. Other -orientation
 - ii. Leads to living virtues
 1. “Virtues important for intimacy emerged”
 - a. Example: kindness, honesty and forgiveness
 2. Virtues increase intimacy when perceived as a sign of love or when love increases through exercising virtues
 3. Pseudo-virtues: lack appropriateness for the situation
 4. Easier when feeling close and secure
 - iii. Other-orientation: backstage concern for one’s self including respect for self, focus on one’s partner
 - a. Valuing self and other appropriately
 - i. Influenced and influences love and intimacy
 - b. Useful in communicating love between spouses
 2. Associated with positive emotions, thoughts, behavior and experiences in the relationship
 3. Components:
 - a. Awareness of the other (especially knowing how the other feels and copes during times of conflict)
 - b. Desire for the well-being of the other
 - c. Sacrificing individual desires for the good of the other and of the marriage
 - d. Communicating care for the other through word and action
 - e. Thinking of the other
 - f. Understanding the other
 - g. Think in terms of mutuality
 - i. Want to give back out of appreciation and desire to make other feel good
- iv. Self-orientation: center-stage concern for self
 1. Connected to experiencing pain in relationships
 2. Avoidance of pain of other

3. Focus on pain of self and spouse not caring
 4. Negative relationship behavior, feelings, thought, and experiences
 5. Think in terms of equity
 - a. Reciprocate positive and negative to ensure things are equal and to avoid negativity
 6. Associated with negative emotions, thoughts, behavior and experiences in the relationship
2. Contextual factors: Security versus insecurity
- a. Security: feeling safe and acting secure in the relationship
 - i. Beliefs and cognitions that facilitate intimacy
 1. Personal Agency: internal locus of control
 - a. Experiencing self as able to affect marriage relationship positively
 - ii. Context of security makes it easier to live virtues
 - iii. Focus on resolving conflict and helping both partner and self feel loved
 - iv. Putting distance in perspective
 1. Balancing intimacy with other values
 - v. More frequently doing the right thing even if they don't want to
 - b. Insecurity: lack of safety in relationship
 - i. Maintaining a focus on distance and negative emotions and beliefs
 - ii. Feeling powerless to affect relationship positively
 - iii. Emphasis on acceptance by one's spouse without expression of self-acceptance
 - iv. Feeling like spouse does not understand one's self.

Core Theme: Consistently Showing Love for Partner and Self

Consistently Showing Love for Partner and Self was the core theme that emerged. Virtues are an important part of spouses drawing close to one another because they are demonstrations of love and facilitate more loving and closeness. All couples reported feeling closer when one spouse exercised desired virtues and when living virtuously towards the other. The difference between couples satisfied with marital intimacy and those who were not as satisfied was that satisfied couples consistently showed love through other-orientation. Other-orientation involved a focus on one's spouse and an emphasis on one's partner's value and comfort in the context of security in the

relationship. A context of security involves love for self. Without this self-love, other-orientation could be confused for complete selflessness. Though this is not generally thought of as a bad thing, removing awareness of and respect for self in a relationship seems to decrease intimacy. Self-oriented [SO] spouses seemed to arrange themselves around their own needs and desires based on insecurity. Other-oriented [OO] couples gave love consistently to both their spouses and themselves.

One's moral system includes beliefs and cognitions about life purposes that affect emotions and other behavior which affects intimacy. A context of security helps to foster beliefs and feelings conducive of intimacy (See Table 3). One of these beliefs that stood out is the belief that "My needs will be met." This prevented excessive self-concern. This belief seemed to be associated with the belief: "I have power to positively affect my marital relationship." This belief was associated with more positive interaction around conflict, more conflict resolution, and more intimacy in the relationship. Showing love to self reflected a belief that "I am valuable." OO spouses, though being focused on the other still viewed themselves as worthwhile, as reflected in how they interact with their spouses and the way they speak. While security helps set the stage for living virtues, virtues can also help to create a context of security. Moral reasoning including beliefs about the importance of living virtuously, such as "It is important to be kind to your spouse," led OO spouses during times of relationship insecurity to exercise virtues which brought about changes in the marriage to re-establish and increase security and intimacy. With this security in place, it was easier to live virtues.

1. I am valuable & others are valuable
2. My spouse cares about me
3. My needs will be met
4. I can positively affect my relationship

Table 3. Beliefs Related to Security. These beliefs were associated with secure attachment style and helped facilitate intimacy.

Self-oriented spouses have been hurt in the marital or other relationships and try to avoid further pain by distancing themselves from their spouse emotionally, and/or taking care of their own needs, and/or trying to influence their spouse to meet their needs. Low power self-oriented spouses were more passive about meeting their needs and positively influencing the relationship, feeling that there was little they could do to make things better in their relationship. High power SO spouses held values and beliefs that interfered with positively influencing the relationship and increasing intimacy. Overall, they valued personal security more than they valued their spouses.

Intimacy-promoting processes found in this study help spouses become other-oriented and keep the Virtue Cycle going in the context of security, make up The Intimacy Cycle (See Figure 1). The Virtue Cycle, beginning at Exercising Virtues involves one spouse exercising virtues, which can be motivated by love and also can increase this spouse's love for his partner. Love serves as a mediating variable between exercising virtues and intimacy, as living virtues demonstrates love and increases love and intimacy in the giver of virtues. The receiving partner perceives virtues in the other as a sign of his love for her, increasing love and intimacy. Further, such perception of virtuosity and love increases as a result of love and intimacy in the relationship, and can lead the receiver to exercise virtues. This partner may also live virtues simply based on

reciprocity as well. In addition, exercising virtues can directly increase intimacy, as certain virtues aid in intimacy-promoting processes, like forgiveness.

The core theme of Consistently Showing Love to Partner and Self is a result of and leads to the Virtue Cycle, valuing, other-orientation, and security. For these processes to result in the core theme, they obviously must be repeated fairly consistently. The processes of valuing, other-orientation, the Virtue Cycle and a context security are mutually determining. At any point of the Virtue Cycle, one of these other processes can be triggered and any process can trigger any point of the Virtue Cycle. An important disclaimer is that while these processes can trigger each other, there are times when they do not, mostly when insecurity interferes with the cycle or when a virtue or value is not done in an appropriate way. For example, if a wife acts kind in order to get her way, this pseudo “virtue” is not actually virtuous nor appropriate in regards to what most would call the higher good and thus may not lead to increased intimacy. The Intimacy Cycle captures processes discovered in this research to be important in creating intimacy.

The Silver Golden Rule

The majority of SO couples explained that the golden rule is a good rule of thumb for how spouses should treat each other: “just to treat the other person how you would want to be treated,” Wife G explained. After analyzing all transcripts, it seemed that these couples did not really live by this rule. Wife H explained:

I don’t think either one of us are focused on each other. We’re both pretty independent, so we just focus on what we need to do and then once that’s settled, we show concern for each other and wonder about “how was your day?”

Wife I told how she sometimes deals with conflict, which manner of dealing with it was the exact way she did not want him to treat her: “I’m mad and I don’t want to say

anything or speak or look at him.” Expressing her frustration at him being closed off, she said “but then he’ll actually say what’s inside him, which is good.” Further, it seemed that these couples frequently could not get past thinking about themselves, about their pain, or about how they would want to be treated to instead of thinking about their spouse. Husband I explained:

And it’s easier just to ride on your own emotions. But the situation is one where there hasn’t been, we haven’t been able to find...the resolution that we have isn’t what we both hope for, you know. I would like to have more of a meaningful relationship with my wife *and my family*. And I think that she would too.

Though his wife may desire a closer relationship with his family and with him, her main concern is to have a closer relationship with him, which he does not really grasp as he is more focused on what he would like. Wife H said:

I think a lot of it is just me being selfish, just taking care of myself. Probably focusing on how I feel rather than on how he feels. Instead of saying, “well, I’m really affecting him maybe I should do something about this,” I’m thinking “I’m going to be stubborn or whatever, be stubborn until the end.”

Wife E explained that in trying to understand each other’s views, a therapist helped them see that they were both saying what they wanted to hear. She explained, “We started talking about that and we started saying exactly what we wanted to hear from the other person when I’m telling you a problem.” Part of this dilemma of not being able to focus on the other’s needs was connected with worry about one’s own needs being met. Wife H put this well:

It’s also like if I’m focused 100% on him then my needs go not looked at. If he were to look after me 100%, then it would be “what am I going to do. I’m giving all my time and effort to him, but I’m not getting the same in return.”

In explaining why the Golden Rule helps, it seems these couples are focused on equity.

“It obviously makes you feel like he cares and so you feel a little more like giving more

willing to give back,” Wife H. Thus, in the Virtue Cycle, sometimes they would travel directly from receiving virtues to exercising virtues without experiencing increased love or intimacy as fully as OO couples who more fully and frequently rounded the Virtue Cycle due to other-orientation and security (See Figure 1).

OO couples seemed to ascribe more to a rule of “think of how the other wants to be treated,” or even just “think of the other.” Husband C explains this well saying: “A basic rule of thumb is to think about how the other person would feel. I think that will take care of most things. Try to make the other person happy before yourself.” Equity was not discussed to be as frequently thought of by OO spouses, though they did speak of reciprocity sometimes. Only when life was very stressful or when they were dealing with conflict did they think of equity. Wife B told:

It’s when we are having a stressful time it’s a lot harder to be kind to your spouse because you feel, or I personally feel that “wait a minute, he’s not being kind to me... and it’s almost like all of my desire to be sweet and be loving and patient and forgiving was gone, so it was kind of like “no, I don’t have to do that anymore”.

Furthermore, stressful times mostly led to an equity-state of mind only when couples became

more focused on self. Wife B explained:

Yeah, we weren’t focusing on each other, and each other’s needs. We were focusing on the babies needs and it was a lot easier to just kind of almost blame the other person for the stress that was in our life at the time, like “well, if you would hold the baby more then I wouldn’t feel so stressed”, or just different things like that.

In general, mutuality and other-orientation were better words to describe them. It was not so much that they only felt like acting kind to their spouses when spouses had done this to them, but rather that acting kind was a general way of being they had and once in a while their spouse’s caring behavior struck a desire inside them to be as kind

back to their spouse. Husband C said, “but being aware that she’s doing all these sacrifices for me...[helps me see that this] is why I need to get my tail in gear.” He also explained maintaining a focus on each other to be important in creating a sense of Couple-ness and in being able to accomplish more together:

Why is the concern for each other important? I think because it’s just a mutual relationship, why you need one person to do this, you know they are in your corner it works the other way too, so you are built on each other so you can achieve more. So if it’s kind of one-sided then it won’t really work, it will but not as well

Wife C summed up OO couples general attitude: “When you give of yourself and you try to focus on what you can do to try to make the other person happy, you end up both being happy. That’s kind of our philosophy.”

Reciprocation of positive behavior has been found to be important in marital satisfaction (Gottman, 1999), yet the current study helps to explain the other variables involved. Simple reciprocation does not always lead to increased satisfaction or intimacy because sometimes this type of interaction simply restates that “I care a lot about myself, (enough so that I’m willing to make you feel good so I can feel a bit better).” True intimacy involves a sincere concern for both self and other. Further, the processes involved in the Intimacy Cycle explain why reciprocation works when it does work. It also helps to delve into underlying constructs like virtues and values important to intimacy.

Demographic Differences

The main differences demographically between the two groupings of self-oriented (SO) vs. other-oriented (OO) couples were that OO couples were in general less active in their religion than OO couples. OO couples also had higher scores on relationship

satisfaction, level of closeness, and living virtues in their ratings of themselves, their ratings of spouses, and their spouses' ratings of them (See Table 4). Higher ratings of virtuosity led to increased frequency of processes involved in the Intimacy Cycle.

Table 4. Ratings of Relationship Satisfaction, Closeness & Living of Virtues

A. Other-oriented Couple

	AH	AW	BH	BW	CH	CW	DH	DW	FH	FW	JH	JW
Revised Dyadic Adjustment Scale	57	56	51	55	56	64	58	63	49	49	47	47
Feel close	9	10	9	9	10	10	9	10	9	9.5	9	9
Live virtues	8	7.5	8	7	8.5	8	--	--	6.5	6.5	9	8
Low	6	3	5	3	6.5	6	--	-	4	3.5	6	6
Spouse's living of virtue	9	8	9	9	9	8	--	--	9	7.5	7	8
Spouse's Low	5.5	5	7	5	8	6	--	--	5	3.5	6	5

B. Self-oriented Couples

	EH	EW	GH	GW	HH	HW	IH	IW
Revised Dyadic Adjustment Scale	44	49	51	43	35	40	47	44
Feel close	6	7.5	8.5	7	8	7	6.5	6
Live virtues	6	5	6.5	8	9	8	6	7
Low	4	4	--	--	6	6	3	1
Spouse's living of virtue	6	6	9.5	6	8	9	8	8
Spouse's Low	4	5	--	--	6	7	5	1

Note. Other-oriented Couples scored higher on relationship satisfaction, feeling close, and living of virtues than self-oriented couples did. Live virtues refers to spouse's own rating of how well they live virtues on average. Spouse's living of virtues refers to the interviewee's rating of how well her spouse lives virtues on average.

Virtues: Showing Love

The Virtue Cycle

Though SO couples and OO couples diverged in some key areas, the majority of couples from both groups explained that increased intimacy through living virtues is a cyclical process. Feelings of love would increase a spouse's desire to live virtues, which helped the other feel loved and help them to love by living virtues, beginning the cycle again. As shown in Figure 1, the Virtue Cycle is a part of a larger cycle, the Intimacy Cycle. Husband C said:

Well I was just kind of thinking that probably that maybe even a two way system, kind of when you love someone you show these traits when you show these traits it kind of induces more love and so it's kind of a cycle.

Wife E explained:

You tend to do more of those things just because you're close...yeah, you don't want to ruin it. So it was very easy, you were used to that pattern you were used to arguing all the time. So, it was easy not do this, but now we have long periods of time with no major anything [patterns of feeling close], you know? So when there is something wrong, we try to fix it. We try to do these things so it doesn't cause a huge problem.

Effects on partner receiving virtuous acts. The Virtue Cycle (Figure 2) begins when one spouse lives a virtue which is interpreted as a sign of their love to the receiving spouse, this spouse feels loved, feels love for her partner, and intimacy in the marriage increases. These things contribute to helping the receiving partner to live virtues herself, helping her become more virtuous and other-oriented, which begins the cycle again, as demonstrated below in Figure 3, "The Virtue Cycle: Effects on Partner Receiving Virtuous Acts".

When one's spouse lives virtues in marriage, the receiving spouse often views such behavior as a sign of her partner's love.

Wife D's story demonstrates this:

One time, it was early in the morning and I got out of bed and I wasn't feeling too well and but I had a test to study for at like at 9a.m and so I was trying to do that, and I told him that I didn't feel very well and I got up to just walk around and try to feel better and I actually passed out and just seeing his concern and compassion for me and trying to take care of me, and made sure I was ok and just seeing how concerned he was and how alarmed that I had passed out so he like fed me some stuff to get some sugar in my system and that day everyone realized, I knew he loved me but wow he really loves me you know what I mean, it just kind of made me feel that love to a different level just because something like that hadn't happened before.

Love often does motivate virtuous behavior, as Wife C explained:

It's a lot easier for me to be selfless and think about his needs than it is for me to be selfless towards just a random person in the grocery store with me, cause I have this love for him that I just want to do things that make his life easier, and show him that he's appreciated, and so I think that love sort of motivates me to be selfless.

That virtues demonstrated their spouse's love for them was explained by couples to be the main reason that virtues brought them closer together. All couples explained that feeling loved increases closeness. Feeling close also increases feelings of love. Many couples mentioned that feeling close and feeling loved are basically synonymous. Couples also felt that they had more desire and ability to live virtues when they felt close and loved. Wife E said, "So if I feel that I'm loved by him, of course I want to give back the same or more." Living virtues comes more naturally during times of satisfactory intimacy and it is easier to do.

Feeling close and loved helps spouses want to become better spouses, parents, and to do better in general. Husband E explains, "just knowing that you're loved is a great thing. Being, oh its just a deep emotion that makes you feel happy and fulfilled and compassionate. It makes you feel strong."

Another motivator to live virtues was seeing their spouse's example. SO Wives and a few SO husbands were not as influenced by example as by the effect the spouse's

behavior had on them. For couples with children, seeing one's spouse living virtues towards their children especially helped inspire virtuous living and drew the observer to her spouse.

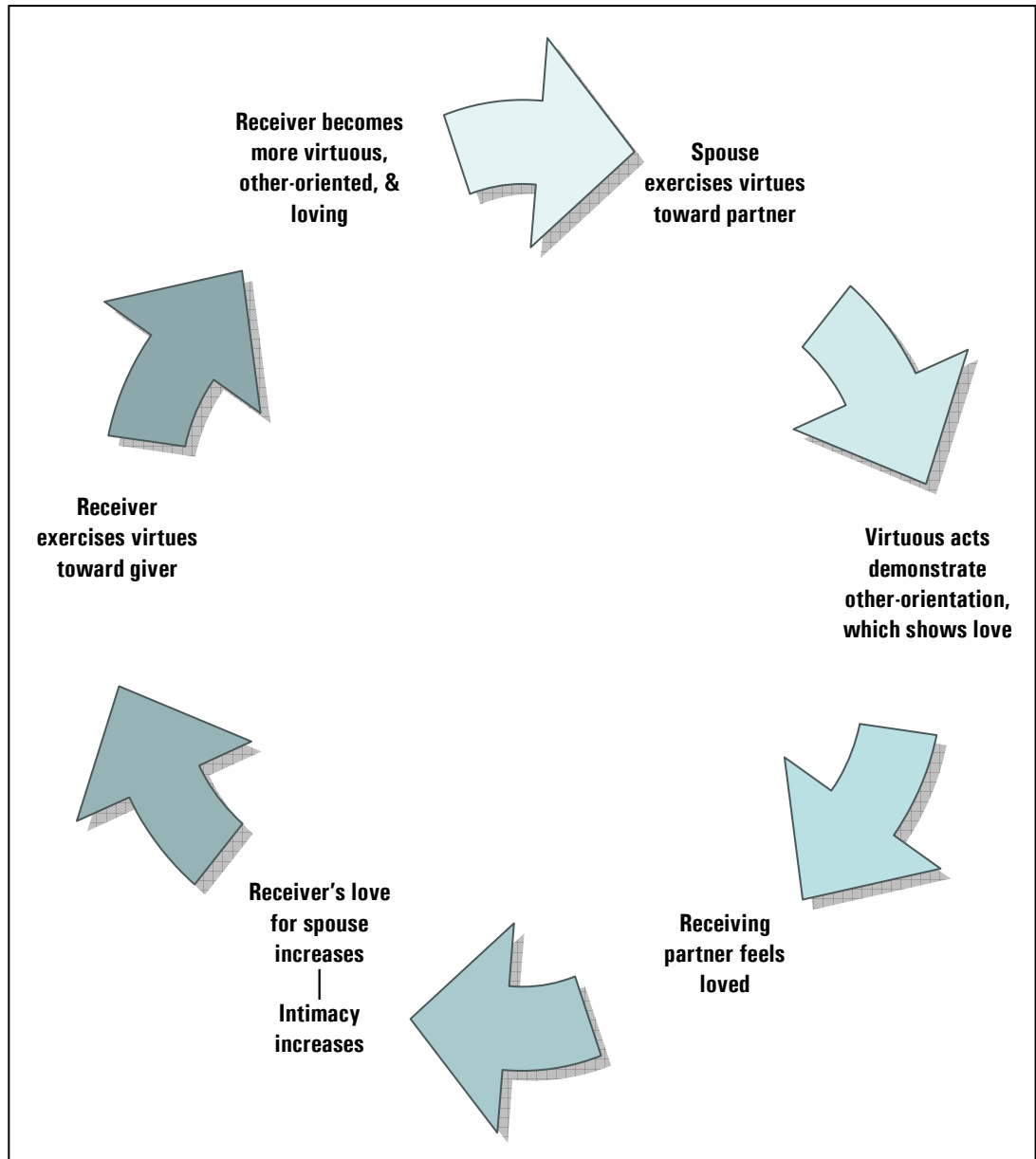


Figure 2. The Virtue Cycle: Effects on Partner Receiving Virtuous Acts.

Effects on partner giving virtuous acts. When one spouse acts virtuously towards the other, his love for her and intimacy both increase. Husband E explains, “Well, being

humble in general just makes me feel more love for her. When I show humility I have more compassion for her and that brings us closer and I love her more when I am that way.” Due to increased love and positive reinforcement for living virtues, the giver becomes more motivated to act virtuously. The giver becomes more virtuous, other-oriented and loving and the cycle begins again, as shown below in Figure 3, “The Virtue Cycle: Effects on Partner Giving Virtuous Acts”.

A few SO spouses did not report experiencing increased intimacy and love as a result of living virtues. As mentioned earlier, this seems to be associated with equity as spouses give virtues simply to return the favor in a perfunctory manner. Also, self-confirming processes were connected with failure to increase intimacy and love. SO couples (besides Wife G) did not express living virtues towards their partners as often, whereas it was a regular occurrence for OO couples. SO couples were more concerned with receiving than giving. Also, for SO couples, living virtues seemed more individualistic, aimed at gratifying self. Wife E explains, “I feel good about myself, and I know that he’s happy and that make me feel even better. I feel [like] a better person.” They feel better about themselves when living virtues, which self-fulfillment seems to be their primary focus. Though a few OO spouses expressed feeling better about selves when serving, their overall aim was to make their spouses feel better. One other reason spouses lived virtues was to soothe anxiety. Husband H’s love would increase depending on his wife’s response to his service, showing how living virtues for him is a mechanism to increase relationship security. If she responds to something kind he does, it shows some acceptance of him, relieving some of his anxiety in the relationship.

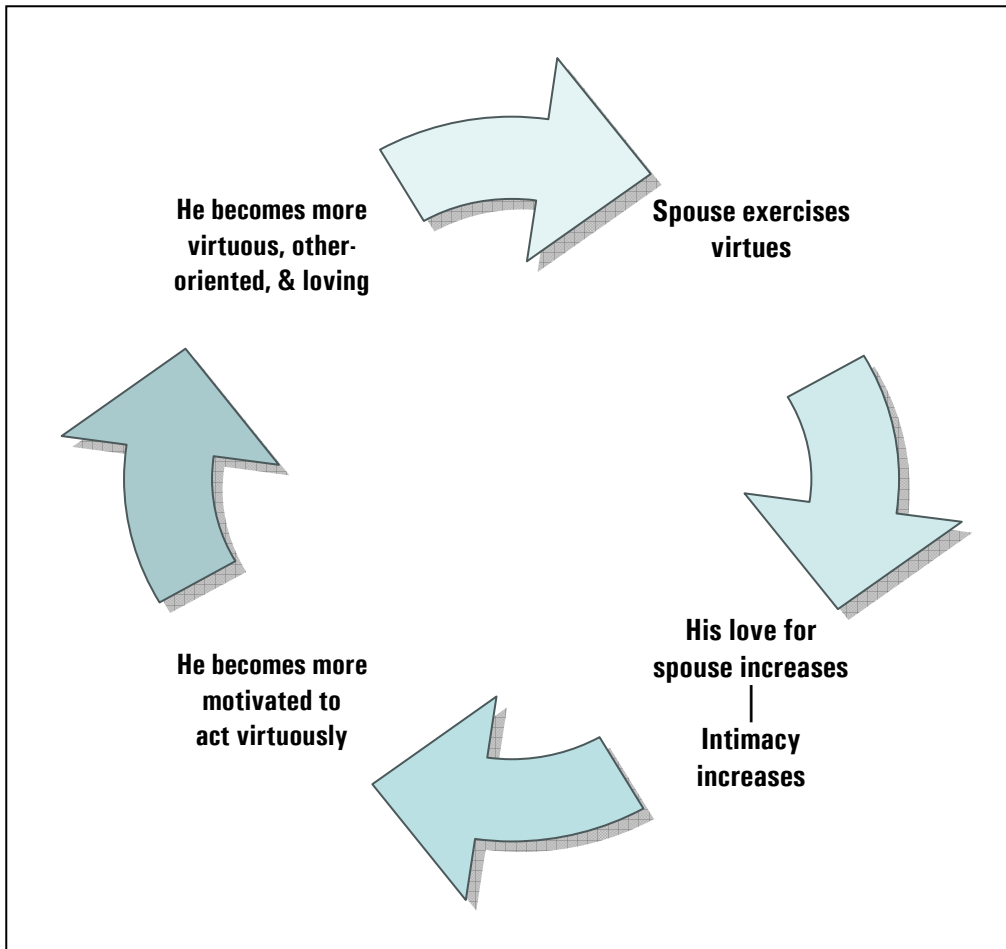


Figure 3. The Virtue Cycle: Effects on Partner Giving Virtuous Acts.

Discussing how virtues bring couples close, Wife F explains, “... you are going to hit bumps in your marriage ‘cause no marriage is perfect, but if you are forgiving and honest with each other, then when you get through that bump you are going to be closer afterwards.”

Many couples spoke about wanting to maintain closeness once they had achieved it. This seemed more pronounced in SO couples because close times were more rare and precious. Wife E explains:

Yeah, you don’t want to ruin it, you know? You were used to that pattern; you were used to arguing all the time. So, it was easy not do this, but now we have

long periods of time with no major anything, you know? So when there is something wrong, we try to fix it. We try to do these things so it doesn't cause a huge problem.

The majority of couples explained how they notice more positive aspects of their spouses when they feel love and closeness. Inversely, when they are not feeling close, it is easier to see each other's faults. This ties into Perceiving Virtues as a sign of Love from the Virtue Cycle. Intimacy and love can lead to increased notice of virtues and also increased attribution of virtuous acts as signs of love.

Living Virtues

Genuinely understanding each other. All but one couple discussed the importance of genuinely understanding each other in increasing virtuous living. In the Intimacy Cycle, understanding is especially associated with valuing the other, demonstrating other-orientation, increasing ease of living virtues, and increasing secure attachment. As spouses understood where the other was coming from, it was easier for them to be kinder or more patient, for example. Husband H was an exception. Though he explained understanding his wife's background and how this knowledge cast light on her behavior, he did not truly seem to understand her. Further, it is likely that understanding is not enough in itself; understanding mostly led to living virtues when an other-oriented stance was adopted. Husband H explained understanding some things about his wife's background, but not really knowing what to do with her difficulty with intimacy and often being more concerned with his own needs to the extent that he did not act concerned about her nor virtuously towards her. This was connected with him focusing on his own insecurities and his hurt from his wife. He explains that after their first big fight, "I was trying to be more understanding [that] she was clinically depressed. She has

social anxiety. ‘Try to work with whatever’s going on. Let’s try to get her some help,’” but though he expressed some understanding of why she reacts as she does, he did not seem to have a strong drive or ability to find out what to do or to look at what he could do to help her.

Wife C explained the importance of following understanding with actions, a component of genuine understanding: “[intimacy increases when] each partner is truly trying to understand what the other person needs and not only are they trying to understand but they really want to do whatever they can to help the spouse out.”

Wife B said:

I think [when resolving conflict] he's clarified what he's thinking and to me that's very important, I can be close to him in this. If I can understand where you're coming from then I do so much better. If I can understand what you're thinking a lot of the times I will kind of have an idea, but I think if you express it and help me understand how I can help him it just goes better I guess it's just more open. It's kind of like the problem is out of the closet and now we are actually dealing with it and that's OK, it's ok to have a problem and it's ok to be feeling like that as long as we both recognize it.

Many couples felt that simply understanding each other more brought them closer. Part of this process generally involved getting to know each other’s family-of-origin. The better OO spouses understood each other, the better they were able to take care of each other’s needs. Further, they were less likely to take things personally, justifying in their minds their spouses are not trying to hurt them but rather are struggling to overcome negative beliefs they learned growing up. Wife J explains:

I think it was just the way we were brought up. I think ... he was so used to being with his parents that he wasn’t with them he didn’t really know ... he didn’t know how to be in the middle. He didn’t know how to choose me or choose his mom. So, I think that he was just taught that you do things for your parents. It was just the way he was taught, and I wasn’t taught that way.

Feeling understood. All couples agreed that feeling understood makes it easier to live virtues. SO couples strongly valued being understood by their spouse over understanding the other. Feeling understood was also reported by some to increase intimacy. “So it’s [him] understanding where I’m coming from and why things affect me in a [certain] way,” Wife E explained Spencer’s understanding of her as extremely important in her wanting to be close to him. This focus on wanting to be understood in SO couples could partially be a result of not feeling understood as often or as well as OO couples.

All couples felt less understood during low points of their marriage, but this feeling was more pervasive and long-lasting in SO couples. This seemed connected to how these couples dealt with conflict. For them, conflict at times involved extreme avoidance and great pain. Further, it seldom led to satisfactory resolution or to increased understanding. This interaction around conflict helps to explain why SO couples feel less understood in their marriages.

Opening Space for Love and Intimacy

All couples felt that living virtues helps them feel closer. Living virtues was explained as part of laying the groundwork for love and closeness to flow in the relationship. This was especially evident regarding conflict when forgiveness became a prerequisite for couples to come close again and to set the stage for more loving interactions and feelings to return. Most couples spoke of trustworthiness and honesty as essential in helping them to be able to open up to one another, which helped them come close and feel more loved, as shown in the Intimacy Cycle. Wife B explains:

It’s almost like you have to have all of those things in place before you can really let yourself, or it’s almost like you want to love this person but it’s a risk, you

know you don't want to be hurt if you put your love out on the line kind of a thing, so it's when you have the patience and the love and the kindness in the home and with each other, it's so much easier to let your love flow.

Virtues are Based on a Value System

Couples from both groups expressed some times when they felt a virtue did not help them come close. This happened when the "virtue" was not consistent with a spouse's value system or when the virtue was out of balance. For example, Wife C, Andrea, explained:

I think because with me it's very important for me to be places on time and so no matter if I'm trying to be patient or not there's just that horrible feeling inside me when I don't think I'm going to be able to get where I need to be, and I feel bad 'cause of things that could have been prevented, it's not like some emergency was making me late or not able to do that things that I need to; but just little things that could have been prevented, so it's hard to be patient.

Andrea was trying to be patient, but could not seem to because to do so would go against valuing herself and against valuing punctuality. Justice would be a more helpful virtue in this situation. This goes back to Aristotle's (2000) golden mean; each virtue is a result of the most appropriate quality in a given situation which lies at a mean in which too much or too little is not virtuous, but rather unbalanced. Likewise, each situation calls for an appropriate reaction or virtue, which other reactions disguised as virtues in that situation would not be considered appropriate in achieving the good and thus are not virtues (2000). Though a truly fitting response is ideal and defines what a virtue is, spouses reported that any action they were able to perceive or offer as a sign of love increased intimacy. While this could be considered a loose use of the term "virtue," it seems that any sign of love, comes close to the most suitable response in marital situations. It was less important to spouses to have their partner be perfect as to know that their partner

cared about them. This was achieved by couples through demonstrating other-orientation.

Other-orientation

Other-orientation is a characteristic or virtue in itself, but also is developed by living virtues and leads to living virtues. It is a way of being (thinking, feeling, acting) that involves one spouse being focused on his partner. Encarta Dictionary explains orientation as a “Positioning: the direction in which something, for example, a proposal, is developed or focused,” and “Leaning: the direction in which somebody’s thoughts, interests, or tendencies lie,”(2005). It is important to realize that these concepts lie on a continuum, with OO couples still exhibiting self-oriented behavior and attitudes at times and vice-versa. Other-orientation in the Intimacy Cycle is associated with an increased desire and ability to live virtues, with increased intimacy, with Valuing, and when constantly demonstrated, it is a sign of Consistently Showing Love for Other. As spouses focus on each other, it leads them to want to do things to help the other person. Contrarily, caring more about one’s own needs over one’s spouses’ decreases intimacy. “[It is] very hard to get close to someone who is being selfish because all they are thinking about is themselves,” Wife C explains.

Other-orientation increases intimacy partly because it shows partners that their spouse cares, that they are valued by their spouse. In the Intimacy Cycle, this step is signified by the two-way arrow connecting other-orientation and values. Wife C explained, “[Other-orientation shows] that you’re one of his top priorities, if not the top priority.” She also explained how her husband being involved in her life and involving her in his own life by even letting her into his sports’ teams locker room helps this couple

show how much they value and care about each other by including one another in their lives. Wife C explains how her husband is as involved in her life as she is in his:

Right now he knows the things that are important to me, he knows the struggles that I'm going through in finding a job, he knows what's going on with my friends, what new different new things we talk about, he knows what I like to do for fun, what I do during the day when he's gone and I'm bored, he knows that I'll sit down at the piano and play for a little bit, or I'll watch the news. And if it was one-sided, one of us would be missing out on the other one's life and not know as much about our spouse and how can you be close to someone who you don't know.

Wife A explains:

[It's important to] think about other peoples feelings. If you're taking the time to think about the other person... [that's] very important because then they know you care. At least I do. I always feel that he cares enough to do things for me or takes time to call me or just whatever he does for me. He doesn't have to but I know he wants to because he knows that's what I like and he wants to make me happy and the same in reverse.

Another reason this orientation increases intimacy is because a focus on the other seems to draw spouses outside of themselves, especially out of personal insecurities, which may help spouses feel more secure in the relationship. This helps them better enjoy the other spouse and themselves, a phenomenon commonly observed in sexual intimacy as well (Wincze & Carey, 2001). Wife B's statement is a good example of this focus on other as opposed to focus on self:

I think I mostly just miss you I know it sounds funny even though you are there I think I just miss being close ...but mostly I think I just feel sad because we are apart. I think that's where it comes in for me, that's the way the feeling happens. It's just I do feel a little misunderstood but mostly I'm just sad that I couldn't understand him the way he needed to be understood at the moment

Thinking of her husband, this wife's main sorrow was over not being able to understand him how he needed to be understood. This is very different from the focus on self and personal pain during conflict that most couples felt, though SO couples felt self-focus and

personal pain much more often and intensely than OO couples did. Differing orientations seems to directly deal with this issue.

One part of other-orientation is living virtues with the welfare of one's partner in mind. Thoughtfulness is a good example of this as spouses try doing things they know the other person would appreciate. OO couples who were able to demonstrate such thoughtfulness seemed to do so based on their context of security, which was connected to being able to meet their own needs, help their spouses better meet their needs, and meet their spouses' needs.

Meeting needs. Seeing and meeting each other's needs, was part of how OO couples interacted by nature and by self-analysis and correction. This component is involved in other-orientation, exercising and receiving virtues, and relationship security. OO spouses asked more directly for their needs to be met and would discuss together specific things that could be done to problem solve. Asking directly for one's needs to be met seemed to help the other spouse better meet needs. Though Couple I did this once and Wife G finally asked her husband to stop teasing her after about 6 months. Not asking sooner permitted him to keep hurting her. She did not seem to feel like she had enough power or right to ask him to treat her better because she partly believed she deserved it. SO couples resorted more to blame and manipulation to get needs met (withdrawing sex, extensive silent treatment), seemingly due to a greater power difference than OO couples combined with less living of virtues, which helps meet needs before there is a need to manipulate. Taking an active approach to getting needs met is reflective of OO spouses' secure context, as they believe the other person cares and will

meet intimacy needs. Further it shows self-love, as they believe they are worth kind treatment.

Though SO couples believe other-orientation increases closeness, they are more worried about their spouse focusing on them. Most held other-orientation as an ideal, but struggled to live it. Wife H did not give her husband much chance to care for her and acted like complete independence was more desirable anyway seemingly due to family-of-origin experiences that led to relationship insecurity and values of independence. All SO couples worried that if they were focused on their spouse's needs, their own needs would not be taken care of. Wife H explains:

... it's also like if I'm focused 100% on him then my needs go not looked at. If he weren't to look after me 100%, then it would be "what am I going to do. I'm giving all my time and effort to him, but I'm not getting the same in return."

Satisfied couples had experienced times when their other-orientation declined and they found themselves focusing on their own needs. At this point, which they often called a breaking point, they would realize that things were not working in their relationship and make a conscious, strong effort to understand each other and focus on each other's needs again. Most OO couples discussed together how they were feeling and how they needed to progress, Husband F was an exception, as he realized through prayer that he was being critical in his thoughts and simply corrected his own behavior without consulting with his wife.

Couple-orientation

Couple-orientation is part Valuing Partner and Marriage, part of Other-orientation and also increases security, love and intimacy. It involves thinking in terms of we, seeing

the marital partnership as a team. Being united increased intimacy. Husband C put it well: “other things [that get in that way of feeling close to each other]? Probably just ... anything that turns you back into individuals...” as opposed to partners involved in the team partnership of marriage. Unity is not to be confused with fusion. Wife H believed that couples should agree on everything, which was not true of OO couples. These couples tried to come to an agreement on major decisions so that it represented both spouses’ desires. Sometimes this involved sacrificing one’s own desire (each spouse tried to sacrifice about equally), but the attitude was not one of defeat but rather of choosing something bigger than self. SO couples struggled to be united. Further, it was usually the low-power spouse who had to sacrifice.

One component of couple-orientation was a joint view of the problem, which eventually contained both spouses’ contributions to the problem. Even to begin with, OO couples often viewed problems and solutions as created by the team and thus solved by the team working together. OO spouses did not blame each other very often, but rather tried to see their spouse as essentially virtuous, good. Wife B explains: I’m sure that he didn’t want to hurt me, he you know was careless in a way in what he said or how he did things.” Wife C also demonstrated a similar attitude in explaining that it is important to give each other the benefit of the doubt.

SO couples frequently viewed problems and their sources as one individual’s fault. This generally involved blaming the other or one’s self. Due to such clear division of whose problem it was and even who was the problem, one spouse was generally urged by the higher power spouse to fix the problem. This left the other spouse free of any responsibility or possibility to positively affect the situation. These matters of agency,

security and orientation towards the relationship became very apparent during times of distance.

Distance

Values and distance. At least one spouse from each couple valued closeness so much that they really struggled to deal with distance in the relationship. For SO wives, this was especially connected with not Consistently Showing Love for Self, part of the core theme of the study. Most of the wives interviewed especially had difficulty distracting themselves from conflict and emotions surrounding it. Wife E would become distracted when engaged in a challenging situation, but she felt that her emotions were so strong that to become engaged on purpose would not have been possible. She explains, “Do I choose? I don’t think so. I think my feelings are stronger. They won’t let me. Its only when the other thing I’m doing needs my entire attention, then I won’t get distracted [by the conflict].” Wife G felt she deserved to feel bad over the situation, so she seemed to be punishing herself. Part of this may have helped to prove to her husband how bad she felt about hurting him. Wife I was mostly affected by her depression helping her feel powerless in the situation. OO wives seemed to be more focused on resolving the problem than SO wives were. SO Husbands F and H were so concerned with resolving the conflict due to insecurity that they did not try very hard to distract themselves. These husbands obsessed over resolving conflict and increasing intimacy (from a stance of self-orientation), which seemed to create more conflict and distance. It seemed that when such neediness based on selfish interests made their wives feel objectified and used.

Most husbands tried to do something to resolve the problem, usually through problem-solving around the situation and/or self-analysis and correction (used mostly by

OO husbands and also Husband E). Husbands B,C, and I seemed less active at problem-solving, as their wives usually took the responsibility. Husband H seemed to have largely given up on trying to resolve problems.

All SO husbands and Wife H avoided conflict and their partner during times of conflict. They were not as bothered by pain from these stimuli, possibly because their avoidance shielded them from some of the pain. It seems that these spouses may not be as affected by the situation because they are the ones upset at the other partner, which position seemed to give them more power.

Connected with avoidance was being unaware of what their partner feels during times of conflict nor how they respond to conflict. It seemed that this could be one reason why conflict was so prolonged. For OO couples, seeing the other person's pain seemed to be a motivator to help resolve conflict. Their knowledge of how the other person dealt with pain was a sign of knowing each other better in general and being more concerned about one another's comfort. Thus decreased intimacy and lack of a secure context, grouped with self-orientation and not exercising virtues, decreased the positive interaction that usually occurs as spouses live the Intimacy Cycle and instead created a spiraling downward involving negativity, selfishness, and insecurity.

As mentioned, SO couples often blamed problems on one person, either themselves (especially for wives) or the other. This individual view of the situation as opposed to seeing things systemically seemed to help couples justify themselves in treating the "one at fault" poorly or avoiding them.

Functionality of conflict. Functionality was a property of distance for all couples. Through conflict and conflict resolution, spouses were able to engage in some of the

following: self-expression, increased understanding of the other, exercising virtues, make-up, and self/couple-analysis and correction. These processes sometimes led to increased intimacy through many routes offered in the Intimacy Cycle (any point could be involved in conflict and interaction processes). At other times, the lack of secure context, virtues, love, or intimacy in conflict interaction further decreased security, intimacy, love and virtues.

Conflict provided some couples with an opportunity to evaluate their living of virtues and practice doing better. Wife A explains: “there's usually things that happen when you have arguments or disagreements. That's when you notice the things you can be better at and when we aren't noticing those things are on our good days because we just do it.” She also expressed:

If we've had a disagreement or something I will go back and sit down and think about I won't tell him but I'm thinking I shouldn't of been so angry, I should have been more patient, should have been more understanding and to remind myself to do those things next time like if we are having a normal conversation oh that was so great you were so patient and you were so understanding we don't say those things to each other.

Conflict allowed spouses to express sadness, fear, anger, love, and happiness they feel in the relationship. Expressing negative emotions allowed spouses to communicate to the other interactions and behavior that hurt them. For OO couples, who were better able to consider a hurt spouse's feelings and respond in a positive way to them, this led to conflict resolution and increased security in the relationship. Spouses knew their partner understood what hurt them and would make a great effort to not do that again. Though some OO couples may have one or two areas in which the negative behavior continues to some extent, overall, they are making an effort on that area, which communicates that

they are not intentionally hurting one another or that they are sorry they did so, and also there are more positive things going on in the relationship than in SO relationships that helps to override some negativity. The more positive interactions occurring, the ratio of positive to negative interactions is greater, which is a characteristic of satisfied couples (Gottman, 1999). In addition, OO partners seem more willing and able to look at the whole situation including external influences like family background, the immediate situation, or stresses at work that are helping their spouse to struggle living a virtue like patience, for example. This seems to be associated with their context of security. Spouses who felt secure in the relationship were less likely to think their partner is hurting them intentionally.

SO couples either struggled from the beginning to express pain caused by their spouse (wives G and I) or quickly learned that such expression would cause great personal pain in the relationship (all). It seemed that such expression from one's spouse was too difficult to receive as it was usually perceived to be a personal attack, sometimes really was a personal attack, and thus threatened an already insecure sense of self. OO couples rarely made personal attacks.

Couples often felt especially close in their relationship after conflict had cleared up. Husband G said:

It brought us a lot closer together. We would hug each other again, and show our feelings and not just be so angry or bitter or whatever it was we were feeling. We did a lot of more emotional, physical contact. It was kind of like we were dating again. It was really cool. The kiss-and-make-up part was really cool.

Conflict also helped closed spouses finally express emotion to their partners. Wife I expressed "...but then he'll actually say what's inside him, which is good even if it's loud

‘cause then I actually see his point of view otherwise he wouldn’t tell me.” Husband H likewise explains, “maybe she was so frustrated with me she just actually opened up.” Wife H was more productive during times of conflict. SO husbands and SO Wife G were able to spend more time with friends during times when they were distant with their spouse. For Couple E, resolving conflict was the main time when Marie received Spencer’s full attention. Spencer explained that he is able to resolve conflict only by:

devoting, focusing completely on the situation or on Marie and making sure that we have the line of communication, that we have a flow of energy going between us, because most of the time I’m lost in thoughts of work and what not. So I know when it gets to a certain point that I have too, no matter what, just drop all of that that I’m thinking about and let go of it. And then just entirely focus on Marie and the situation. So, yeah, I mean. I don’t know what percentage I give to Marie compared to work, but...[at those times]...you have to give 100 %.

In regards to actual conflict resolution, OO couples became motivated to resolve the conflict or problem leading to distance and were able to do so. SO couples, on the other hand, did not express such smooth conflict resolution. Avoidance of the problem and one another made conflict resolution difficult and prolonged. They reported a problem of not being able to work through some problems at all, leaving frustration that seemed to build up. Not only did problems build up for them, but life in general seemed to be piling up higher than they could handle.

SO couples explained feeling at the edge, on the brink of crisis, if not already amidst a crisis. Husband I explains:

But it wouldn’t be as bad if we weren’t so close to the brink as far as other things that we are supposed to be doing in a relationship that we don’t end up doing. Like, for example, me doing school work, we don’t spend as much time together. We don’t have any time to...you know, there’s things that we understand that we should be doing that we have a hard time doing just because where we’re at in life that...kind of push the situation more.

Feeling “close to the brink” of disaster contributed to making conflict seem and become more severe and unmanageable for them. Such insecurity in life coupled with insecurity in the relationship made it difficult to make a positive move towards increasing one of the components of the Intimacy Cycle and also intensified insecurity, low intimacy, and self-orientation. Husband H said “I think she had just really hit a down point. The only direction left was to go up.” Also, feeling at the edge seemed to be associated with a shortage of positive interactions, stability, and virtuous living that could have offset the intensity of negativity. On the other hand, OO couples, like Wife F, explained how “It’s easier to forgive him for the small things when he’s just really being so wonderful in all the other areas.” OO couples, still dealing with busy-ness and difficulties of life, did better at balancing life’s challenges to make time for closeness.

Values and Intimacy

Time and intimacy. Being too busy often interferes with intimacy. Wife C, however, shows how perspective can influence this, “I think that it [busyness] can [interfere with intimacy] but I think that in our case sometimes that actually brings us closer together because we have to make a lot more conscious effort to be intimate and close.” Though perspective can help couples to come close through the Intimacy Cycle even during busy times, intimacy and related processes require time. Every couple spoke of the importance of having time for intimacy. OO couples explained that they need to have enough time to be able to serve one another. Time to be together that is set apart from other relationships and tasks enriches the relationship and increases intimacy. Husband I explained:

...me doing school work, we don't spend as much time together. We don't have any time to...you know, there's things that we understand that we should be doing that we have a hard time doing just because of where we're at in life that...kind of push the situation more, [that make situations in our relationship feel more stressful].

Wife B illustrates:

In fact a couple of weeks ago we had been feeling really separated for about a week and a half or two weeks in that we felt like so much extra time was being spent on this baby, which we love dearly but we noticed that we were growing farther apart, and I remember looking at my spouse and saying, "um, do we still like each other?" and it was really kind of sad, and I think the reason that we were both still there was our commitment to each other, but we decided that it was time to take time alone together, and that's how we got through it but we decided to just, you know we just let the baby stay in there and cry and we're just going to go and talk to each other in the other room, and it really helped...

Yeah, we weren't focusing on each other, and each other's needs. We were focusing on the babies needs and it was a lot easier to just kind of almost blame the other person for the stress that was in our life at the time, like "well, if you would hold the baby more then I wouldn't feel so stressed", or just different things like that. I guess when things get complicated lifewise, there's just not a lot of time to spend with each other, there's not a lot of free time to work on our relationship, that's when things get hard.

Time seemed to be an important currency in showing one's spouse one's priorities, part of Valuing in the Intimacy Cycle. Though most couples were fairly busy (Couples G, J and H were only slightly busy), OO couples explained treating time together as precious and making special efforts to be together. This may be harder for SO couples because they are more focused on themselves and because frequently for them time together means conflict and for some, served as a strong reminder of their spouse's selfishness or rejection. Also, OO couples explained the situations that led them to be busy ultimately involved family goals. SO couples discussed their busy lives mostly aiming towards meeting individual goals, though this was less pronounced in Couple G.

Other important values? This question helps to show the intense valuing of intimacy. For all couples, intimacy was viewed as one of the top values in marriage. For OO couples, this was generally not problematic, as intimacy was not a problem. For SO couples, regularly dealing with lack of intimacy (which at times was especially prolonged), their emphasis on intimacy only seemed to highlight the distance they were feeling.

Wife C explained being consumed by distance from being apart geographically from her fiancée before their marriage.

And so wanting to be close to each other was sometimes a physical pain almost ...when you really want to be close to each other and there's no way that you can be close it can make it a little bit harder to enjoy some of the things that are going on in your life right then. You know I lived in Washington DC this great city with all kinds of great stuff going on but some days when I was especially missing him or wanting to be close to him I just really lost the desire to go out and see the next cool tourist thing ...it makes it almost like a physical withdrawal when he's gone... instead of just living the day and just kind of going with the day and just enjoying it, it's more like trying to get through the day check the day off on the calendar and move on to the next day, which I don't think is the best way to live life..

She could not really be in the present or enjoy herself or others because she was so focused on wanting to be close to her husband. While her experience is understandable given her situation, all other couples carried this same phenomenon, though toned down, into their marriages.

Other values. Valuing other things like commitment and each other's family-of-origin helped all couples get through times when they were feeling distant.

For Couple F, feeling like they were supposed to be married to each other served as an anchor during times when they do not feel close.

We really prayed about it and both felt very confident that we were suppose to be married so I think that's been a huge ...[strength] for us cause that seems to be

what we always fall on, we know this is supposed to happen so we can make this work and a lot of times it falls back on that.

Wife B explains the value of commitment increasing during times of decreased intimacy:

The commitment part is kind of, well it's always there, but I feel it the strongest when I'm having a difficult time with my spouse, and maybe not the strongest, but I think about it the most, I mean I feel very committed to him when we are intimate as well, but it's kind of the point where you stop and you say ... instead of "Oh I love this person and that's why I am staying with him," you say "Oh I am committed to this person, and that's why I'm going to try my best to work this out and get it back to where we [are] intimate together again."

While some SO couples spoke of commitment being the last thing they think of to help them through a distant time, a few of the OO couples mentioned it being the first thing they considered. Wife B illustrates:

... commitment is usually the first thing that comes to my mind as to why I can't just walk out on this. . . I have committed to him that we will be together forever, and this is something that is extremely important, and that's why I need to get it back to the loving relationship.

Demonstrating such strong commitment to one's spouse is one means of increasing and affirming a secure attachment. Wife G said:

I think going through that test [me forgiving him going to prison early in our marriage], he's never really doubted. Because we went through something so horrible together that it just really brought us closer together. Every other girlfriend left him, and he was adopted. I think he's had like this thing like, "women are going to leave me." That just kind of showed that I was here for good. I wasn't going to be. . . even through the hard times, I would still stick around. That definitely brought us closer together.

Valuing relationship security. Secure context, which served as a trigger to other-orientation and the Virtue Cycle, an effect of these two variables, and a key part of Consistently Showing Love, seemed to be a primary value for all spouses, though it generally seemed to be held unconsciously. One especially insecure SO couple tried not to value security seemingly because they did not think they would receive such safety in

their relationship, typical of avoidant style of attachment (Bartholomew, 1990). Some components of security are: knowing one's spouse cares about one's self, and being able to trust one's spouse, which is part of feeling safe with one's spouse. Wife F explains: "I think just his knowing how much he loves me makes me want to be closer to him, makes me want to break down my walls and reciprocate those feelings. It makes me want to spend more time with him 'cause I like feeling loved."

Wife H discussed fears of opening up to her husband, who she did not feel safe with, "I didn't want to, some of it was that I didn't know how and just fear, afraid of being open and laying my life out on the table, what if my heart gets stomped on what if we break up, that type of fear." This was before marriage.

Major problems at the beginning of the relationship was a phenomenon observed in a majority of SO couples. Wife I's statement demonstrates this:

I feel that they [(his family of origin)] would prefer him back just him or and how he hasn't been so firm on that issue as to whether which way he goes, with them or with me and it started early as soon as the marriage started, so even if I know through his behavior over the years that he is with me the feelings have still stuck from the beginning when I wasn't sure that he preferred me or them so security as far as knowing that he is with me [is lacking]. And money, security as far as [not knowing what will happen with] our future or mak[ing] enough to meet our needs [contributes to insecurity].

Rocky beginnings seem to interfere with relationship security, contributes to feelings of insecurity which are already present, and also seems to be partially caused by existing insecurity.

A Context of Security

Security contributes to other-orientation, which contributes to intimacy. These two phenomena are mutually determining and together help an individual achieve

Consistently Showing Love to Spouse and Self. A few OO couples had begun on rocky terms and at least one partner had displayed self-orientation and a context of insecurity. However, when the more secure spouse strongly expected and even required that the insecure, self-oriented spouse commit to them, the insecure spouse sought counseling. In the other case, the couple moved away from the husband's family-of-origin. Both situations helped husbands to more clearly and strongly commit to their wives. Certain beliefs consistent with a context of security helped these couples overcome distance and insecurity.

Beliefs Associated with a Context of Security

Beliefs contributing to a Context of Security (see Figure 2) feed into Showing Love, Other-orientation, and Virtues. Some of these beliefs that OO couples hold are "my needs will be met," and "I have power to positively affect the relationship with my spouse." "My partner cares about me" is another belief OO couples expressed. The belief that "I am valuable" seems to underlie these other beliefs, but also may grow from positive conflict resolution and interaction with spouse.

Expression of these beliefs was sometimes direct in that they realized and stated such beliefs in their conversation. At other times, the belief showed through in how they interpreted interactions in the relationship (including spouses' behavior) and also in their relational behavior. These beliefs were especially important in helping one's partner to better love her in the way she desired and helping partner feel loved, which served to facilitate intimacy.

Other

Closeness, especially in marriage, increases the need for virtues and also the necessity to improve one's living of virtues. Not only has this, but it often helped spouses put other values in perspective. Through the Intimacy Cycle, couples grow close to one another and increase love for each other, which helps them value each other more, and live virtues better and more frequently. It was reported that marriage constantly tries virtues. Wife D explained that marriage gives more opportunities to live virtues. Sometimes marriage makes it more difficult to live virtues, but sometimes it is easier to do so because there is a great amount of love for one's spouse and there is strong motivation to live virtues with one's spouse because these couples viewed spouses and marriage to be connected to purposes of life. Fulfilling these purposes well requires virtuous living, increasing the importance of virtues and the desire and ability to live them. Living virtues in marriage is something that spouses felt they should do and that they wanted to do. If this desire was not present in the moment, spouses would often live the virtue anyway because they knew they had to in order to fulfill their purposes. Wife A explains:

Because in marriage you're closer with that person than you are with anyone. You're married to them it's not like you [can] break up and you [...] go your separate ways like you might with a friendship or an acquaintance or even a family member. You're married. You live together. You're forced to deal with things and so those things come up.

Wife E also explains this concept:

So what helps, I think, is, well, what helps me [to live virtues] is recognizing my marriage and how important it is. I love my husband to death. I want to be with him forever. That's the most important thing to me. So when I'm being a jerk it's time for me to change, you know? Because I really value what I have with him. And I'm willing to do whatever it takes, even if I have to swallow my pride.

When spouses did not live virtues. It is curious that spouses at times did not live virtues even though they felt they should. Wife E expresses, “I know exactly the things that I need to do to avoid some things, and I don’t do it. And I’m very conscious of that. And why I don’t do them? Because I don’t want to do them! I want to be mean right now.” She went on to explain how when she is bothered by something, she wants to be mean back. Why are spouses unkind to each other at times?

The majority of spouses reported protecting themselves, especially through withholding forgiveness when living this virtue might hinder an important message of “I need to be treated better. What you did is not acceptable.” This function was connected with the need for security and threats to it led spouses to retreat at times.

Wife I explained how feeling insecure in her husband’s desire to change makes it difficult to forgive: “It’s hard to forgive when I can’t trust that it will change or be different.” She questioned whether or not “he’s really trying or doing what’s best for the family.” This problem would involve refining the meaning of forgiveness and likely balancing out forgiveness with other virtues, such as justice in order to show love to spouse *and* self. Sometimes when couples thought they were struggling to live a certain virtue, they were actually living an opposing virtue that was more appropriate for the situation given their goals. Wife C as explained earlier could not be more patient and hope to also meet her objective of punctuality. Justice was a more helpful virtue in helping her husband to respect her desires of timeliness.

Reciprocity, found to often be a component of protecting selves, interferes with living virtues at times due to threats to security. When one spouse is selfish, unforgiving, or unthoughtful, this sometimes influenced the other spouse to return that same attitude.

This was more common and frequent in SO couples. In the most severe case it involved revenge, “to punish somebody in retaliation for harm or injury done” (Encarta Dictionary: English (North America 5/24/05). Husband H explains “I’ve told her this many times too, what you give is what you get in return and if you don’t give it to me then don’t expect it from me, don’t expect it back.” His rule about his behavior to his wife was “if you see me respond like a jerk to you it’s a direct reflection of what you’ve started with me,” demonstrating both reciprocity and blaming his behavior on his wife.

Wife B explains seeking revenge in order to show her husband how she feels:

It’s an awful thing. I guess [I am rude] to get revenge, in a way, just to kind of, I know this sounds awful but in a way to show him what it felt like and how I’m feeling, you know maybe if he said something that I didn’t like, or that made me feel bad, I want to say something back to him that would make him feel the same way, in a weird way just to kind of express to him the way that I was feeling at the time. Or making him feel the same way, I mean it’s not really something that you do in your best moments, but it’s almost kind of subconscious, when you hurt you want to hurt back.

While this is a negative way of showing her husband how she feels, she explains feeling that these are not one’s best moments, which seems to contribute to choosing a less desirable way of communicating pain. Wife G has also wanted to hurt her husband so he could understand how badly he had hurt her:

He would make mistakes and my first feeling would be to become angry at him kind of make him see what he put me through kind of a thing. Forgiveness, I didn’t want, that was a hard thing for me to. . . I just kind of wanted to say, “look what you put me through. I’m going to make you feel just as bad as you made me feel.” He really did hurt me on a few occasions, where I didn’t want to forgive him. Because there’s been things that he hasn’t been truthful to me about. Even after [I went through so much pain from him not forgiving me].

Although this seems to be a vicious way of responding, many of the spouses were not solely interested in hurting the other out of simply a mean spirit, though this was

sometimes involved for both OO and SO couples. Wife E explained: “You hurt me, I want to be rude back.” Beyond just plain rudeness though, there was a desire to communicate the pain that one’s spouse had caused her, which could serve as a protection from further pain inflicted by the spouse if he were to honestly understand and let action follow understanding.

SO spouses reported giving up living a virtue when it did not seem to help, which was connected with relationship insecurity. For example, Husband H gave up being kind when his wife did not seem to appreciate his kindness. Husband B explains “I feel like those virtues require a lot of personal effort, to live them, and it felt like my personal effort wasn’t paying off, and so I felt like I shouldn’t give more effort to it.” OO couples did not experience this as frequently, possibly because they saw themselves as able to affect the situation through living virtues.

Exceptions were not being honest to avoid conflict and Husband C who saw that he was simply being selfish. When asked why it was harder for him to be more thoughtful by waking up on time he explained, “I was thinking about me, not her, and I justified it.”

There were times when nothing seemed to help couples come close again. This occurred for SO couples when they were feeling insecure, disrupting the Intimacy Cycle at context of security. For most of the couples, this situation involved the husband choosing to defend and stick with his family-of-origin over his wife. For a few SO couples, it was necessary for them to see the problem resolved before they would come close to a spouse whose actions had seemed rejecting. Another manifestation of insecurity leading to distance and hopelessness was when one spouse could not see the

other's view. The OO couples experiencing this differed from SOs in that they would not accept this from their spouse. One thing that would happen was they insisted that their partner understand them and the blamed spouse decided to show more care about his wife than family, as Wife A explains:

So I got to the point where I'm like, "no more, I can't do this anymore." I basically I did. I just gave up. I didn't want to try anymore, and that's what I came and told him, "I don't want to try anymore." And basically, for me, I think in retrospect, it was to see what he was going to do about it. I wasn't happy. I didn't like the way life was going.

Helpless feeling of not being able to influence the situation came into play for all SO couples. They sometimes saw that the only thing that could help was time and did not seem to put effort into improving anything in the meantime. "[If] it's ... one of his more depressed days then it doesn't matter what I do because he's low. Nothing helps cuz nothing I do will matter, he's depressed," Wife I explained. She also explained when she is feeling depressed that, "You don't want to try anything." Wife G said her husband was too angry to see her side or let her influence him, seeing herself as powerless in the face of his strong emotion.

Though OO couples on occasion felt helpless, it was to a lesser extent, a lower frequency, and the period of time in which they did not feel they could do much good only lasted a day at most before they acted in ways to come close, if they had not tried other things in the meantime, which was common. Their harder times were more fleeting, such as when body and mind were affected by fatigue, hunger, or hormones or when one spouse had become more busy and self-oriented for a short period. These situations signaled to spouses that it was time to stop and make things better. Specifically, one wife demonstrated to her husband that she understood his side of the

story and appreciated what he was trying to do. This softened him, encouraging him to try virtues once again. He then tried to understand his wife better, and the couple came closer because of it. In SO couples the wives were less understanding, somewhat less demanding, and the distant spouses were less willing to be influenced by the other spouse.

Eventually couples came close again as time passed, one spouse seeks help from someone outside (the Lord, a therapist, a bishop), one spouse apologizes or reaches out to the other, or an external event draws them close again (moving away from family-of-origin, needing to correspond with each other to be able to move).

Interviews as Interventive

Interviews seemed to be therapeutic, as shown by couples solidifying their beliefs and feelings towards virtues as we spoke. Wife B, 7 months after her interview explained how looking closer at how they deal with distance has empowered her to act in different ways:

Oh I think it's definitely ... something that I think about a lot. Especially when we talk about how we react to each other when we're having a difficult time, and it just kind of helps me realize "oh, I can do something about this, or I can handle this in a different way." It's been nice.

Yeah, I can be a little more patient, and plus I can notice a little more easily when he's having a difficult time with, maybe I said something that hurt him, and he said something back to me...It helps me to retrace my steps and find out, "oh, what did I say that offended you, and what can I do to apologize for that, because I really didn't mean to hurt your feelings", kind of a thing. It's easier to get things back together again a lot faster.

Research-like discussion, in which couples are viewed as experts of their relationship, could serve as one route to solidifying couples' cognitions and emotions regarding virtues, secure attachment, and other-orientation.

Summary

In review, other-orientation and a context of relationship security are mutually determining. Both of these ways of being are connected with beliefs and values that maintain and increase each other, the living of virtues, and intimacy in marriage. When lived again and again, they feed into Consistently Showing Love for Self and Other. All three of these phenomenon increase virtuosity and are increased by living virtues. Virtues can increase intimacy and love as spouses grow in love toward each other through living them and as spouses perceive virtues as signifiers of their partners' love for them and of their partners' other-orientation. Showing Love for Self and Other through the multitude of ways offered in the Intimacy Cycle is the core theme explaining why values, being virtuous, other-oriented and/or living in a context of relationship security matter.

Chapter IV: Discussion

Findings indicate that showing love for self and other strongly contributes to increased intimacy, and is connected to living virtues, and becoming other-oriented. Kaslow & Robison (1996) found that spouses feel loved as they perceive their partners valuing them, being grateful for them, and meeting their needs. My work emphasizes the relationship between other-orientation, virtues and love, including how the giver's love can increase in serving the other. Other-orientation is associated with increased living of virtues with a genuine concern for the other, while Self-oriented (SO) couples were more likely to live virtues for self-satisfaction. Living of virtues is generally associated with increased intimacy for either group, though increases are greater and more lasting in Other-oriented (OO) couples. Other-orientation is associated with a context of security, with security in this study generally preceded orientation, although some couples became more securely attached through exercising other-orientation and virtues. Relationship security is associated with sets of beliefs and thoughts, affect, and behavior characteristic of this way of being. Orientation and security, whether other-oriented and secure or self-oriented and insecure, are mutually dependent. Thus a spouse who feels secure relationally holds a psychological reality of his wife caring about him. He is therefore better able to focus on his spouse and her needs. Likewise, if he were to first focus on her because he thinks he should (thought drawn from belief) or because he loves her (affect), and also show love for self by expecting kindness and taking care of himself when he feels hurt, he may help create security in the relationship.

The number of therapists who see the importance of virtues and further know what to do with them in the context of therapy and research are too few. Some of the

research cited at the end of the Discussion section explains different virtues that have been stated as integral to happiness in marriage by some researchers and couples. However, many researchers will simply state the significance of one or two or ten virtues without really explaining what they are, why they are important and how they can be used in therapy. This study shows that virtues are important because they show love and because they are each a sign of their partner's orientation around their well-being. Virtues are also highly useful in increasing intimacy as they show caring and make it easier for spouses to trust one another and come close. All in all, virtues are a sign of one's deep and abiding valuing of and love for one's spouse. Spouses could thus benefit from clarifying their values and working on putting values into action through living virtues.

This study also offers deeper understanding of what a virtue is: a golden mean appropriate in a given situation (See Figure 4). Virtues possess cognitive and emotional components affected by the giver's moral training, level of security, feelings of agency, and disposition. Each component and sub-component is affected by one's moral system.

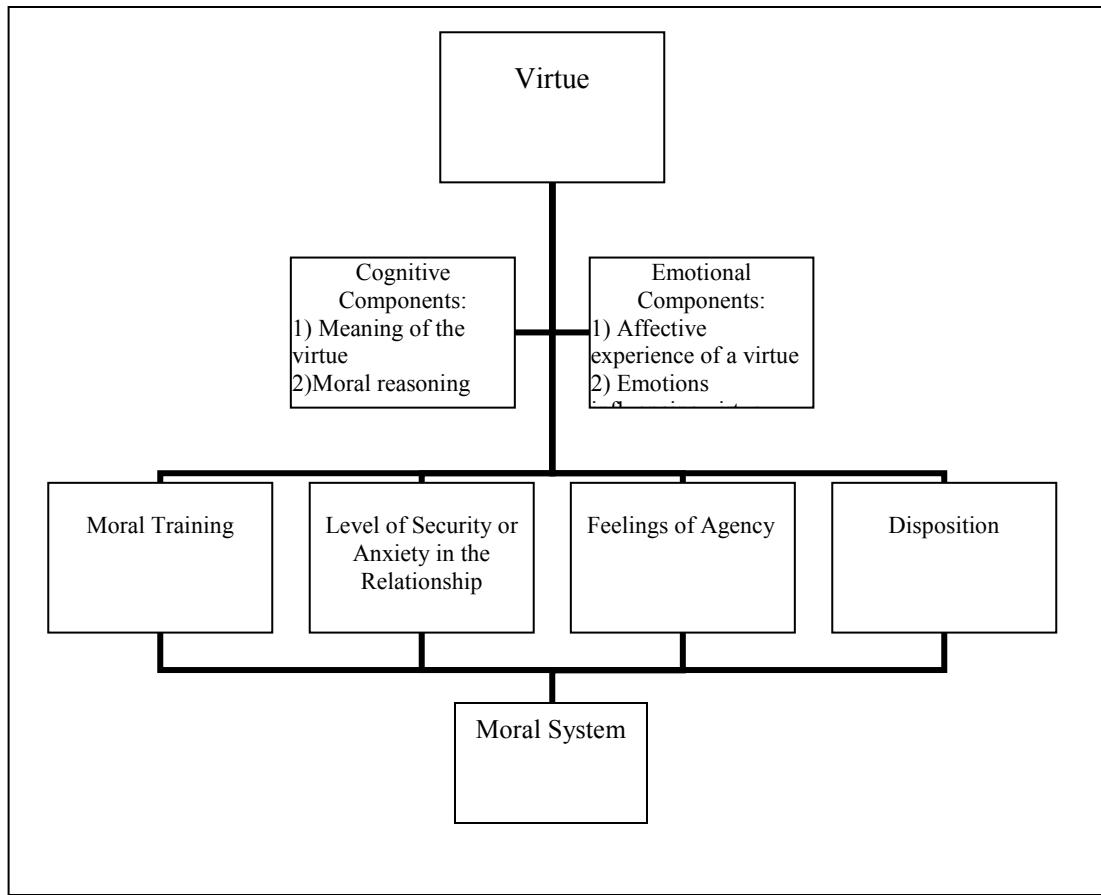


Figure 4. Composition of a Virtue. A virtue has cognitive and emotional components which are affected by moral training, level of security in the relationship, feelings of agency, and disposition. A virtue, its components and sub-components are all affected by one's moral system.

A virtue has a cognitive component which includes the meaning of the virtue and moral reasoning which are both influenced by one's view of the good and one's moral training. The cognitive component involves the meaning that is given to a virtue by the giver and by the receiver and to those observing. The meaning of a virtue is affected by the meaning of the good to the judger of the virtue. Another part of the cognitive aspect of a virtue is the thinking that is involved in deciding to exercise a virtue, which involves moral reasoning of some sort. Both of these aspects are affected by moral training. For example, one couple in the study viewed the good as dealing with relationships they had with their in-laws and thus did not want to break up their marriage based on that moral

reasoning. Other couples engaged in possibly higher levels of moral reasoning, such as considering how their spouse would like to be treated or how they should act if they want to be a kind person, which thoughts were connected to their view of the good. This cognitive aspect of virtues is an important one, though couples mentioned being overruled by emotion at times.

Emotions that had a great affect on one's difficulty with living of virtues dealt either with pride or with insecurity while emotions that helped spouses in living virtues involved love and gratitude. Love and gratitude served as motivators to live virtues and also result from living virtues. Virtues involve both an emotional experience (the feeling one gets when caring for another or being honest, for example) and emotions which influence living of virtues. Pride justified to spouses that they were in the right, told them that they did not need to change themselves, and fed into moral reasoning touting the good of the self and often the need to teach the other a lesson. From relationship insecurity and associated beliefs that "my partner does not care about me," "I'm not important," and/or "no one will meet my needs," came emotions such as fear, sadness, and anger. Level of security or anxiety in the relationship thus affected one's willingness to live virtues. Some spouses, however, chose to act virtuously even when they felt insecure and anxious. One intervention that can thus be employed to encourage individuals to exercise a virtue despite their emotions involves psychoeducation and therapy that helps clients to learn their ability to choose. If clients learn and solidify their valuing of virtues through making such valuing overt and part of their identity, they will be at a better place to choose virtues despite their emotion or environment. This could be done through asking clients what is important to them, then offering them moral

dilemmas to help them more firmly commit to their values and to living virtues. It would also help them judge how highly they value virtues and other values that serve as motivation to live virtues. Here is an example of a moral dilemma:

A wife is torn between staying with her husband (in which situation she feels responsible to take care of his needs though he is not concerned with her needs and has not been open or able to see her view) or taking care of herself and leaving him. What should she do?

The moral dilemma engages cognitive and emotional components of virtues.

Emotional components are engaged as dilemmas arouse feelings of fear, love, anger, or sadness connected to choosing one thing over another.

For example, Wife E says she values her marriage more than anything. She also values feeling understood. I might ask her which she values more. A list of why each is important would be helpful. If feeling understood is the most important thing to her, she has to confront the possibility that to her, the relationship is less important than feeling understood. Why this value is so important to her would need to be explored through Socratic questioning. If you did not feel understood, what would that mean? And what would that mean? These questions could help her understand the core value and moral system behind feeling understood. Possibly feeling understood makes her feel loved or feel validated. So is feeling validated the most important thing in her life, a core purpose of her life? From her behavior and language, it would appear that self-validation is her reason for living and the basis of her moral system. Yet when her belief is broken down this far, she may think about or sense a larger purpose and definition of morality or “the good.” If she does not, at least she has clarified what is important and both her and her husband can understand what their relationship and actions are based on and should lead

to according to her moral system. If she is able to entertain a different, higher meaning of the good through soul-searching, questioning, and exploring other concepts of the good from others' lives, she would likely solidify a good that involves valuing more than self-validation. This is not certain, but likely. Most people tend to believe and find that valuing others according to a meaningful belief system makes for a higher and more complete understanding of the good. If she is able to adopt or re-discover a higher meaning of the good, and if she is able to apply this morality to her marriage, she will see the relationship in a different way. She will begin to think more of her husband while also learning to validate herself so this desire or need is less urgent and more within her control. Therapy can help her to learn this. A change in perspective and values might lead to a change in emotion. Though a change in perspective can lead to a change in behavior this is not always the case. One virtue that might need to be stressed and worked on first would be the virtue of honesty, which includes consistency. If Marie's stated moral system is out of line with her actions, then she is struggling with consistency. Possibly, she does not value consistency enough. Helping her to decide to value consistency more might be done through moral dilemmas. She could also think about how much she appreciates consistency in others and what things would be like if others or herself were extremely inconsistent. Further, she could consider if this virtue is something that she values in others and would also value in herself, leading to more self-respect. Moral training in various forms could be utilized directly on increasing consistency. Once consistency is in place, actions follow words and beliefs, leading to virtuous behavior in general and specifically in the marriage.

Moral dilemmas can be used to improve clients' ability to engage in higher levels of morally reasoning. Some clients may lack a sense of right or wrong or hold views which are not in alignment with the good they expect for themselves. This was apparent as SO couples desired to be treated well, but did not think or speak as much about their spouse's well-being and treating their spouse well. The Arbinger Institute seeks to increase spouses' moral reasoning and bring about a change in perspective by splitting couples up into small groups (4-5 people) of husbands and groups of wives to think through, discuss, and resolve moral dilemmas. This seems to be one good way to increase moral reasoning and alter a client's view of what is right. Simply knowing how to think in terms of morality would likely increase clients' feelings of agency and also their motivation to act morally and live virtues, as people often feel passionately about what is right and wrong.

Feelings of agency help clients to act virtuously. If clients experience themselves as agents of their behavior through authoring their lives and out-of-therapy homework assignments, they can choose virtues even when it is difficult to do so. Such a homework assignment might include having clients keep a journal about times when they feel powerful and times when they feel powerless. In therapy, clients could be guided through different possible interpretations and responses which would help them feel more empowered until they can do this on their own.

Negative emotions and the meaning of insecurity often led spouses to disengage from moral reasoning and act purely out of emotion, or engage in faulty moral reasoning that the good involved caring for themselves while simultaneously excluding kindness towards the other. Extreme or faulty reasoning in a marriage including the above and the

extreme of only caring for one's spouse without caring for one's self both fail to observe an appropriate mean. Therapy can help reduce irrational moral reasoning through increasing security in the relationship, which is a basic issue. Clients can still learn, however, that virtues can be exercised in any situation, including in contexts of insecurity.

Disposition, or personal temperament, was discussed in the review of literature to affect virtues and also to be affected by them. Though this was not a focus of my research, it became apparent that this two-way relationship between disposition and virtues does exist and needs to be understood to better work with couples on increasing virtues. Disposition affected some spouses to behave more virtuously more naturally than others. For spouses who act virtuously by disposition, less work will be needed as they by nature act thoughtful and generous for example. For spouses whose dispositions do not incline them to easily live virtues, more work will be required to teach them virtues. As they live more virtues, their disposition will gradually reflect this change in the way they live and it will feel like second nature for them to live virtues. In the meantime, these spouses can be praised highly for any progress they make in that they are climbing uphill to exercise virtues. When they do live virtues, their actions and the surrounding situation could be analyzed to help them break down the steps of how they were able to act virtuously and how they can repeat these steps again. Further, it can be stressed to both spouses how much the giver must value the receiver in order to do something which takes such extra effort as was expended. It would be hard to say which aspect of virtues offers the most leverage in increasing virtues without further research. Rather, each component affords openings for increasing virtues.

Table 3. Interventions Aimed at Increasing Virtues

<ul style="list-style-type: none">▪ Make valuing virtues overt<ul style="list-style-type: none">○ Ask client how virtues and values are part of who they are<ul style="list-style-type: none">▪ How could they be more a part of who you are?○ Support clients in a quest of clarifying the meaning of the good<ul style="list-style-type: none">▪ Ask clients what is important to them▪ Offer moral dilemmas to help them clarify their commitment to values and to engage in moral reasoning<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Have clients in a group or with friends try to resolve moral dilemmas▪ Have clients list behaviors they sees as bad or unhelpful in a relationship as well as virtues and behaviors they sees as good or helpful in a relationship<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Have clients connect these behaviors to their view of the good▪ Help clients judge how highly they value virtues and other values<ul style="list-style-type: none">• (Solidifying a client’s moral system gives him a different outlook on his behavior and helps him use moral reasoning in choosing behavior)▪ Increase the virtue of honesty, which includes consistency to ensure moral system is in line with actions▪ Increase feelings of agency<ul style="list-style-type: none">○ Speak in terms of clients authoring their lives○ Give homework assignments for clients to choose virtues even when it is difficult to do so○ Have clients keep a journal about times when they feel powerful and times when they feel powerless○ Guide clients through other possible interpretations and responses which would help them feel more empowered until they can do this on their own▪ Increase relationship security▪ Challenge thinking errors used to excuse poor behavior▪ Analyze situations in which clients live virtues including a recipe steps to living the virtue, and connected thoughts and emotions<ul style="list-style-type: none">○ Challenge clients to apply this recipe to other situations during the next week and keep record▪ Celebrate progress made on living virtues▪ Model virtuous, kind, respectful behavior through your interactions with client▪ Give clients an experience of living virtues through enactments▪ Ask spouses to increase their living of virtues, and to keep record of their spouse’s living of virtues▪ Have spouses keep track of their own virtuous behaviors (caveat: this exercise is to help them analyze their virtuous actions and not to keep score or show their partner how great they are)

Moral training. How do spouses learn to live virtues? Though various components are involved in living virtues, spouses learn to live virtues through living virtues. Solidifying one's moral system (including clarifying the meaning and value of different things) can lead spouses to live virtues. So can increasing moral reasoning, feelings of security and agency, and thinking through moral dilemmas. Any of these options can be employed, based on which intervention seems to best address the clients problem. Is the client inconsistent? Try solidifying her moral system. One ideal way to directly teach virtues may be through experiential methods. Enactments (outlined well in Butler & Gardner, 2003) are one way of doing this, as couples through communication in therapy could learn to exercise virtues in communicating with their spouse in the context of therapy. Often, couples will be able to generalize living virtues outside of therapy after learning and practicing this ability over time in therapy. One process that could help with this transition is to ask spouses to increase their living of virtues, and to keep record of their spouse's living of virtues, similar to an intervention used in cognitive-behavioral therapy which aims to increase caring behaviors (Baucom, Epstein, & LaTaillade, 2002). Spouses could in addition keep track of their own virtuous behaviors with the caveat that this exercise is to help them analyze their virtuous actions and not to keep score or show their partner how great they are. Many ideas for interventions dealing with virtues are listed in Table 5 on the preceding page.

While skills-training can be helpful in teaching spouses some of the components of a virtue, it is very possible to exercise a skill without exercising a virtue. This can be mapped out with skills on the top of a grid and caring along the side (see Figure 5). Just as skills without caring is a combination which falls short of a virtue, so too is caring

without skills. This latter combination may involve an emotion which might be considered a virtue, however, in most situations, it could not be considered the most appropriate response if it does not involve action. Skills-training without moral training will fall short of teaching children, youth, adults, families, and couples both before and during marriage how to live virtues in a relationship. Not only is this important in moral training, but it is also important in shaping how people view relationships. A skills-only approach to relationships would generally lead to a view of relationships as slot machines, something you can get something out of. Further, skill without virtue would be little more than manipulation. In this view of relationships, partners are objects and/or a means to something else. Moral training leads to a view of relationships as ends in themselves and as contexts in which virtuous, moral, and meaningful exchanges can take place.

	Skills	
Virtues	Yes	Nc
	Nc	Yes

Figure 5. Skills/Virtues Grid. Combining skills with virtues (squares 1 and 4) creates virtuous actions. Skills without virtues is manipulation (1 and 3). Virtue without skills is insufficient to yield desired relationship outcomes (2 and 4). Ideas for increasing virtues based on my study have been discussed. Research on moral training supplements this section, especially addressing moral training aimed at youth and children.

Research on Moral Training

McDaniel (1998) in a review of literature regarding moral training found many things that hinder and help training youth in moral matters. Forms of education that do not work well to develop character in youth are prescribing values, lecturing, moralizing, authoritative teaching, and failing to involve students in creating the values framework. Also, education that does not teach complexities involved in moral decisions have not been proven effective, such as the “Just Say No” campaign against drugs. Rewards and punishments are ineffective, as rewards teach youth to behave virtuously for rewards, which system is disconnected from a moral system. Thus in settings involving pressure or lack of external rewards, this learning does not generalize in children (McDaniel, 1998). It is possible, however, that rewards could help in developing skill to behave virtuously which can later be drawn on once moral reasoning is improved. Yet it does seem that moral training must be in line with moral reasoning: living virtues is done for a higher good, not for a candy bar or other reward and not to avoid punishment. Acting virtuously should come from a desire to help others and attain the good. A child should be able to tie living virtues to her view of herself as a caring person, not to a reward. Punishment is another technique which does not help in teaching virtues as it yields short-range compliance and as it mostly teaches children what not to do instead of what to do (1998).

McDaniel also believes that teaching moral values may not help with character development as values and behavior are not always in alignment (1998). Teaching values may not work because it steps outside of someone’s world and what is important to them.

However, certain methods of therapy helpful in bringing about change in some populations involve increasing consistency between stated values and behavior through motivational interviewing principles (Bennet et al., 2005; Channon, Huws-Thomas, Gregory, & Rollnick, 2005). Processes involved deal with confrontation and teaching value-related concepts instead of teaching values directly (Miller & Rollnick, 2002). Working with values one already holds affords many options to help bring behavior into alignment with values. Different methods that help in motivational interviewing are: examining values including where they come from, their effects, and positive values that could be adopted from role models. Therapists can help clients examine their value-related behavior and make changes. Are clients being short-sighted, focused on immediate outcomes instead of thinking long-term? Are they being self-oriented, thinking of themselves without being sensitive to harm that they might cause others? Is the behavior inefficient, unable to most fully meet needs? Fundamentally, therapists help clients become more aware of values and behavior and discrepancies between the two (2002).

There has been little rigorous study of character-building outcomes. What has been done is mostly drawn from school settings (McDaniel, 1998). One component of effective moral training involves youth participation in setting the agenda for such training. Peer, parental and community involvement as well as treating students respectfully, requiring them to act responsibly and giving them chances to do so are also important components of successful moral training. Working to increase positive feelings in the school, family and community contexts is another component which enhances moral training through providing a good environment and through encouraging

people influential in youth's lives to reinforce good behavior. Peer counseling and education are helpful. Increasing awareness of social influences that increase pressure to engage in negative behavior, such as drug use, especially helps youth resist such behavior. Of great help is teaching youth skills helpful in resisting pressures through role-play (1998). These methods are practical and focus more on understanding pressures and skill development. They are helpful and it is important that there is a core of morality from which youth can decide in the first place that they want a higher good and do not want drugs. It may not help for youth to know drugs are bad for their health unless they see health as an important value, which has a place in their moral system.

In her review, McDaniel (1998) found that cooperative learning is a learning strategy that naturally increases virtues. Students are placed in small groups where they help each other to learn. Not only does this foster empathy and concern for one another, but it also helps students increase acceptance of diverse backgrounds and races. Parents who model virtuous behavior teach their children effectively through this modeling and through explaining why they do what they do, especially when such communication involves emotion. High quality family relationships help develop character (1998). The reason for this could be that quality relationships involve virtuous behavior and encourage virtuous behavior from others. Watching parents demonstrate caring and engaging in caring behaviors in multiple domains especially helps to develop character(1998). Moral training may be enhanced when children are able to feel a greater sense of connection to others, when children are able to apply general ideas to their individual lives, when they feel responsible to help others, when they are involved, when they discuss with peers moral behavior, and when they are allowed opportunities to

govern themselves, to think critically and creatively and to and interact with others, especially cooperatively (1998). Moral training is something that schools have been especially interested in, and is a task that therapists could greatly help with. Increasing virtues in youth, families, and marriages is a difficult yet imperative undertaking.

Research Support for the Importance of Virtues

Fishbane's (1998) theoretical and clinical knowledge affirms the importance of virtues in intimacy including: thoughtfulness, self-responsibility, and caring. She also speaks of couples feelings empowered to create a caring relationship and genuine intimacy as spouses learn to influence their relationship, which OO couples had learned, but SO couples lacked. Through interpreting Buber's work, Fishbane emphasizes interaction and relating to the other as a whole, respectful person. Relating in terms of "I-Thou" instead of "I-It" and thinking sincerely of the welfare of the other and self (p. 42), resonates with the concepts of showing love for self and other, other-orientation and couple-orientation. Collaboration, interdependence, and we-ness are viewed as essentials in creating true intimacy. Relational views of problems and solutions are important, as found in my study, while blame blocks truly knowing and connecting with one another. Through a shift in thinking, spouses can change feelings of being controlled or of dependent and are able to take more responsibility for their relationship. They are also able to more sincerely and kindly respond to one other. Also, spouses are then freer to choose to give to the other since they can give out of love and do not feel obligated to give based on their partner's dependency.

Fowers (2001a; 2001b) proposes that living virtues and maintaining a balance of values is important in a successful marriage. He also argues that overvaluing emotional

intimacy may prevent spouses from enjoying other aspects of marriage. This study gives some support these ideas. However, overvaluing emotional intimacy did not seem to be much of a problem for these couples. The greater problem, though, was found in lack of secure attachment. Some spouses avoided emotional intimacy and acted like they were not very concerned about connecting emotionally seemingly due to recognized or unrecognized fear of rejection. Others were frustrated with a lack of emotional connection. Though other values helped them to stay committed to each other and to the marriage, this frustration over emotional intimacy persisted. Overvaluing emotional intimacy was not the source of the problem though and it is hard to judge whether or not these couples overvalued emotional intimacy. SO low-power spouses may have valued emotional intimacy at an inappropriate level as such valuing sometimes prevented them from defending themselves, thus not showing love for their selves. Yet, not defending selves was not only due to valuing intimacy. It was also due to valuing partner, marriage, and not knowing what better to do than what they were doing. This could have been due to their insecure attachment style, but more investigation would need to be conducted to determine this.

Some mixed support is found for Fowers' claim that overvaluing emotional intimacy can prevent components of a successful marriage. Though most couples did well in maintaining a sort of balance among values, emotional intimacy was greatly valued. Such high valuing of it only created problems for low-power SO spouses. Further, it is unclear whether valuing emotional intimacy less would create more or less problems for these spouses and also whether it would be more or less virtuous to value emotional intimacy less. It is quite a moral dilemma. Values and virtues are important in

marriage, especially in their systemic influence on other processes involved in the Intimacy Cycle. Virtues and values are useful concepts in understanding successful marriages, and they seem to be most important as means of expression and reception of love which increases security and other-orientation, all feeding into one another.

Marital satisfaction and marital intimacy are significantly connected with each other (Greeff & Malherbe, 2001); thus, it is helpful to examine how virtues affect marital satisfaction. Kaslow & Robison (1996) conducted a study in which 57 couples married from 25-46 years were given a battery of assessments measuring spouses' perceptions of areas associated with satisfying marriages. Satisfied couples were found to problem-solve using more encouragement and collaboration than less satisfied couples (Kaslow & Robison, 1996), showing signs of both other- and couple-orientation. Couples in the midrange of satisfaction were more set in how they thought they should deal with conflict and were also more controlling. The current study found that perceived lack of control is associated with insecure attachment and less satisfaction with intimacy. They did not create much space for themselves or the other to take a time-out or let some conflict resolve on its own. What is interesting is the common theme of control associated with interaction processes for less satisfied couples. Dissatisfied couples were especially likely to become more independent and isolated from one another (1996), consistent with my findings of SO couples resorting to avoidance during conflict. This seems to be connected to avoidant attachment and an escalating, negative spiral.

Essential ingredients of marriage reported by respondents were commitment and communication that is honest, open, assertive, uplifting, and kind (Kaslow & Robison, 1996). These authors explain that couples had the liberty to ask one another for needs to

be met because of equitable power distribution and shared leadership, something SO couples in my study lacked.

Increased commitment leads to less problems in the marriage as well as less difficulty resolving problems (Kaslow & Robison, 1996). More essential ingredients of marriage are respect and responsibility to each other (which SO couples in my study did not express as being important compared to OO couples), integrity, loyalty, and trust. Johnson & Talitman (1997) found one component of trust to be especially important in predicting couples' satisfaction after engaging in Emotionally Focused Marital Therapy. This component is females' faith in their partners, which predicted both wives' satisfaction and increased husbands' intimacy at follow-up. Cooperation, mutual support, effective problem-solving skills, joint decision-making and compromise (less common among SO couples), flexibility (especially when dealing with conflict), fun, love, and expecting reciprocity were also important ingredients (Kaslow & Robison, 1996). These key ingredients are confirmed by my study with the exception of expecting reciprocity. This could be due to a difference in definitions of reciprocity.

Heller & Wood's (1998) study found that couples who less accurately predicted their spouse's responses on the PAIR (Personal Assessment of Intimate Relationships) also reported lower intimacy. This was interpreted to indicate that similar experiences of intimacy and mutual understanding increase intimacy. To truly know each other, authors found it important to share with each other and also to receive. Reciprocity is part of this process, which mutuality is different than *quid pro quo*, exacting "reciprocity" which might be better defined as equity. Measuring equity, Larson, Hammond & Harper (1998)

found that inequity is associated with lower levels of overall intimacy for wives, though for husbands no significant correlation was found between inequity and intimacy.

One last key ingredient was holding shared values, especially the belief in something bigger than self or family (Kaslow & Robison, 1996). Amith-Ben-David & Lavee (1996) found that spouses who held a stronger ideological orientation agreed more frequently and were more cohesive. Sharing a higher belief was found to be important in my study for most couples, though the importance of such a commonality was emphasized more in OO couples. Also, sometimes the marriage was explained to be a core value in itself. Though Kaslow & Robison offer ingredients important to marital satisfaction, their study does not fully explain why they are important.

In the current study, increased understanding of the other's perspective was not always connected with changes in behavior as Cast (2004) also found in her study. She did find that in the first year of marriage, when one spouse becomes more supportive, the other spouse feels like they are better able to understand them. Supportiveness leading to increased understanding was found in OO couples in the current study. SO couples, on the other-hand did not report having understanding of their partner's coping during times of distance. After the first year, ability to role-take (understand other's perspective) depends more on the spouse's belief about her accuracy in role-taking than on either person's behavior (Cast, 2004). This provides additional support for the importance of the early period of marriage in setting the stage for later years. When spouses are able to role-take well, they act more supportively and less disruptively, interpreted by the author to be a result of increased confidence in their knowledge of how their spouse will respond. This may then increase security in the relationship but also could result from

being more supportive and feeling increased confidence in one's ability to care for their spouse.

Husbands reported being less able to role-take than wives, which was attributed by the author to be connected with wives greater need to appraise husbands' perspective because of their position of lower power (Cast, 2004). Kaslow & Robison (1996) suggest putting power issues out on the table in therapy so spouses can become aware of these problems and work through them. The manner in which couples communicate and work through conflict has been proven to be an important part of marital satisfaction (Gottman, 1999), however there is rarely explanation of why certain patterns are connected to increased satisfaction (Fowers, 2001a).

OO couples viewed themselves and others to be of worth in showing love for self and other. Bowlby (1969) proposes that attachment style is based on a person's judgment of the worth of self and of others, based on working models of one's self and attachment figures. Secure individuals value others and self, avoidant individuals judge others more negatively, and anxious individuals hold more negative views of self (Weger & Polcar, (2002). Examining current attachment literature, Weger & Polcar propose two categories of attachment beliefs: level of comfort with intimacy (reflecting beliefs about others) and level of anxiety about relationship (reflecting beliefs about self).

Ainsworth, Blehar, Waters, & Walls (1978) identified three basic attachment styles in infants: secure, anxious/ambivalent, and avoidant. Bartholomew (1990) reviewed attachment literature to categorize four adult attachment styles. The author concluded that adults exhibit secure, pre-occupied (containing both pre-occupied and ambivalent), dismissing avoidant (become unaware consciously of the need for

attachment and pain caused by attachment disruption and maintain a positive self-image) and fearful avoidant (feel unworthy of love and help from others) attachment styles. SO couples in my study often operated out of a context of insecurity, with one pre-occupied partner and one avoidant partner, generally dismissing avoidant. Weger & Polcar (2002) conducted a study and found that person-centeredness (similar to other-orientation) associated with understanding and validation of the other is associated with secure attachment style. Further individuals who hold secure attachment beliefs engage in more intimacy-promoting behavior. In this study, secures send more “person-centered comforting messages” than insecurities (p. 95). They are also more skilled at communicating such understanding and reassurance clearly than those afraid of rejection. Bartholomew’s (1990) adult attachment styles helps to explain the dynamics and associated attachment beliefs SO spouses dealt with and how different contexts of attachment contribute to or can create an obstacle for living virtues. Effective intervention for helping couples increase intimacy may involve building a context of security in their relationship as a background from which living virtues becomes easier.

Limitations

The sample was fairly small (n= 10). The sample studied may have been a unique population in that all participants were LDS, though some less active than the rest. In addition, there was little diversity in culture and ethnic origin. Findings may not generalize effectively to a more diverse population. Also, the first four interviews were conducted with couples who tended to be much more satisfied with intimacy than other couples. This coincidence could have biased the study in that a healthy model was evident initially and thus somewhat formed the lens through which I looked at other

couples despite my efforts to maintain a more objective perspective. In addition, some biases could have seeped into this study due to researchers' inability to completely separate themselves from their interpretation of this data. Further empirical validation is needed. More empirical evidence on the relationship between virtues, values, and marital intimacy is needed and could be conducted based on conceptualization offered by the Intimacy Cycle.

Fishbane (1998) proposes many thought assignments in challenging the way couples experience one another. An example is for each spouse to consider from a "We" stance the effects of each behavior and communication with the other on the relationship. Spouses are also encouraged to author their relationship, thinking of what they would like to have happen and how they can make it happen, which leads to empowerment.

Fowers & Wenger (1997) propose helping families discuss the meaning of good and the purpose of life, which could serve to solidify this purpose in their minds, achieve greater harmony between this purpose and daily actions, unify them, and help them to work together at achieving it.

Therapists maintaining curiosity and commitment to both spouses and allowing each spouse a chance to be heard may help spouses create new interaction patterns that free partners from insecurity and self-focus, as they learn to value each other in how they communicate (1997).

The current study's greatest contribution is in its creation of a theory integrating the importance of virtues and values in marriage. This theory explains relationships among variables as well as information about how these variables affect one another. It also provides a way of conceptualizing different types of attachment styles in connection

with ways of relating with others through other-orientation, couple-orientation and self-orientation.

This study also helps to explain why communication, conflict resolution, and power affect intimacy, based on viewing such dynamics as a result of relationship security and other-orientation or their opposites. While findings were overall similar to other studies dealing with marital satisfaction (contributing to validity), it also provides a base for research dealing specifically with virtues and marital intimacy.

Clinical Implications

Many clinical implications have already been outlined, especially regarding virtues. Others include helping couples to view their relationships and intimacy in terms of other-orientation. Couples could also benefit from becoming aware of how a context of security affects living of virtues and how they can live virtues despite anxiety in the relationship. Therapy should work on both increasing other-orientation and security. This could be done through helping each spouse feel safer in the relationship (including working towards both spouses better meeting their own and each other's needs) through EFT and psychotherapy. The importance of agency needs to be highlighted in therapy. Therapy should also help clients (especially those who are anxiously attached) to become more empowered to positively influence their relationships.

Increasing intimacy is another entrance into the Intimacy Cycle. This could be accomplished through Emotion Focused Therapy (EFT), couples therapy, and/or psycho-education can all aid in increasing intimacy. PAIRS, a group that provides both psycho-education and cathartic processing was found to increase cohesion, self-esteem, intimacy as well as to help couples express feelings, identify negative interaction connected to

spouses' families-of-origin, and distinguish bonding needs from the need for sex (Durana, 1996).

The Virtue Cycle provides many openings for therapeutic interventions: working to increase intimacy, to increase capacity to exercise virtues, to increase feelings of love, and to identify and work with client's values. Stories and fables as well as imagery seem to be natural means of teaching virtues. Also, the importance of living virtues in certain moments of conflict or frustration in the relationship can be highlighted by recalling problematic interactions in the past and helping clients to examine more helpful ways of acting. Moral dilemmas can help clients solidify their moral system, reasoning, and motivation to live virtues. Self-help material could be used to help couples understand and live virtues and to increase other-orientation. Couples could benefit from therapy through increasing: 1) capacity to exercise virtues, 2) observations of virtues in partner, 3) feelings of love, 4) other-orientation, 5) intimacy, and 6) relationship security through the above and through activities and exercises aimed at connection using the Intimacy Cycle.

The bottom line this research offers to clinicians is that living virtues increases intimacy. Three things they can help clients with are 1) solidifying their moral system through outlining values, 2) tying virtues to values, and 3) helping clients to become more consistent through matching their actions with their moral system through moral training.

Questions for Further Research

It would be helpful to find out more about other-orientation including the attainment of this orientation and changes in orientation and triggers to such changes.

Research examining change processes in switching attachment styles, especially in marriage would be helpful. Which virtues are most relevant to love, intimacy, security, and other-orientation? Does building specific virtues affect these variables most effectively or are they more affected by a change in perception? What helps certain spouses live virtues even when they do not want to? How can moral training best be accomplished? How does upbringing affect love, virtuosity, intimacy, security, and other-orientation and the relationships between these variables? What type of parenting, education, and other intervention with children better instill these components in children?

Connecting upbringing with attachment and its affect on relational intimacy may provide more information on how couples become more secure. How does the Intimacy Cycle apply to other relationships? What differences might emerge in this cycle in applying it to other relationships? Though not explored in great depth, many couples mentioned the importance of religion and God. Butler & Harper (1994) write about spouse's relationship to God and how it affects their relationship with their spouse. Research examining how one's relationship with God affects relationship security would be helpful.

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Appendix A

Newspaper Ad

Looking for married couples to participate in research interview about their marriage. Each spouse will be compensated \$12.50 for a one hour interview in Provo. Call or email to see if you qualify: (801) 623-3448, gnatalie2003@yahoo.com.

Appendix B

Flyer

Married Couples! Natalie Stevens is conducting research focused on closeness in marriage. For participating in this study, you will be compensated \$25 as a couple.

Participation includes involvement in a 1 hour interview for each spouse (2 hours total, which can be scheduled at different times if needed) at the BYU Comprehensive Clinic. Please contact Natalie if you are interested in this opportunity.

Natalie Stevens
(801) 623-3448

GNATALIE2003@YAHOO.COM

Appendix C

Revised Dyadic Adjustment Scale

Most persons have disagreements in their relationships. Please indicate below the approximate extent of agreement or disagreement between you and your partner for each item on the following list.

Name	<u>Always Agree</u>	<u>Almost Always Agree</u>	<u>Occasionally Agree</u>	<u>Frequently Disagree</u>	<u>Almost Always Disagree</u>	<u>Always Disagree</u>
1. Religious matters						
2. Demonstrations of affection						
3. Making major decisions						
4. Sex relations						
5. Conventionality (correct or proper behavior)						
6. Career decisions						
	<u>All the time</u>	<u>Most of the time</u>	<u>More often than not</u>	<u>Occasionally</u>	<u>Rarely</u>	<u>Never</u>
7. How often do you discuss or have you considered divorce, separation, or terminating your relationship?						
8. How often do you and your partner quarrel?						
9. Do you ever regret that you married (or lived together)?						
10. How often do you and your mate "get on each other's nerves"?						
	<u>Every Day</u>	<u>Almost Every Day</u>	<u>Occasionally</u>	<u>Rarely</u>	<u>Never</u>	
11. Do you and your mate engage in outside interests together?						
How often would you say the following events occur between you and your mate?						
	<u>Never</u>	<u>Less than once a month</u>	<u>Once or twice a month</u>	<u>Once or twice a week</u>	<u>Once a day</u>	<u>More often</u>
12. Have a stimulating exchange of ideas						
13. Work together on a project						
14. Calmly discuss something						

From: Busby, D.M., Crane, D.R., Larson, J.H., & Christensen, C. (1995). A revision of the Dyadic Adjustment Scale for use with distressed and nondistressed couples: Construction hierarchy and multidimensional scales. *Journal of Marital and Family Therapy*, 21, 289-308.

Appendix D

Virtues Scale

Here is a list of some personal qualities. Please rate how important you think each quality is in feeling close in your marriage. 1 means the quality *is not* very important and 10 means that the quality *is* very important. 6 and up show that the quality is fairly important in feeling close. Please add and rate any qualities that you think should be added to this list.

Virtues that may increase closeness:

1. _____ Other-orientation- being focused on each other
2. _____ Being supportive
3. _____ Commitment
4. _____ Compassion
5. _____ Courage
6. _____ Easygoing
7. _____ Faithfulness
8. _____ Forgiveness
9. _____ Honesty
10. _____ Humility- including compromise
11. _____ Humor
12. _____ Kindness
 - a. _____ Caring
13. _____ Openness
14. _____ Respect
15. _____ Thoughtfulness
16. _____ Trustworthiness
17. _____
18. _____

Values that may increase intimacy:

Here are many values (things some view as important, as priorities) listed out. Please rate how important you think each value is in feeling close in your marriage. 1 means the quality *is not* very important and 10 means that the quality *is* very important. 6 and up show that the quality is fairly important in feeling close. Please add and rate any values that should be added to this list of things that when valued can make you feel close in your marriage.

1. _____ Acceptance
 - a. _____ validation-feeling that your view is understood and respected
 - b. _____ Feeling like you can be yourself
2. _____ Autonomy

- a. _____ Taking care of yourself
3. _____ Having things in common:
 - a. _____ Sharing Religious Beliefs
 - b. _____ Sharing Backgrounds
 - c. _____ Sharing Interests
4. _____ Communication
5. _____ Endurance
6. _____ Spending time with each other's immediate family
7. _____ Friendship- being friends
 - a. _____ Playing together
 - b. _____ Enjoying recreational activities together
 - c. _____ Knowing each other
 - i. _____ Knowing what's going on in each other's lives
8. _____ Looking forward to your future together
 - a. _____ Planning your future
 - b. _____ Holding shared goals
 - c. _____ Creating something together
 - d. _____ Anticipating something new and exciting
9. _____ Happiness
10. _____ Honesty
11. _____ Intimacy- feeling close
 - a. _____ Feeling close through sharing feelings
 - b. _____ Physical intimacy- affection
 - c. _____ Sexual intimacy
 - d. _____ Feeling close through sharing thoughts
 - e. _____ Anticipating closeness
12. _____ Kindness
13. _____ Learning
14. _____ Love
15. _____ Valuing the marriage
16. _____ Morality- doing the right thing
17. _____ Mutuality- each spouse sharing equally with the other
18. _____ Valuing each other
 - a. _____ Feeling safe with each other
 - b. _____ Feeling loved by spouse
 - c. _____ Feeling connected to each other
 - d. _____ Inviting spouse into your world
 - e. _____ Being invited into spouse's world
 - f. _____ Spending time together
 - g. _____ Spending energy on each other
19. _____ Valuing the positive/ optimism, appreciation
20. _____ Security
 - a. _____ Meeting spouse's needs
 - b. _____ Having spouse meet your needs
21. _____ Support
 - a. _____ Encouragement

- b. _____ Uplifting each other
- 22. _____ Progression
- 23. _____ Trust
 - a. _____ Assuming virtuosity in partner. Judging other's intentions to be good.
 - b. _____ Being able to be vulnerable.
- 24. _____ Unity
- 25. _____ Working on the marriage
 - a. _____ Communication
 - i. _____ Compromise
 - b. _____ Endurance
- 26. _____ Hard work
- 27. _____ _____
- 28. _____ _____

Appendix E

Informed Consent Form

Informed Consent to Participate as a Research Subject

Introduction

Natalie Alexander Stevens, Master's Student in the Graduate Program of Marriage and Family Therapy, together with, Dr. James M. Harper, Dean and Professor in Brigham Young University's School of Family Life, is conducting research focused on values and closeness in marriage.

You have been recommended as a couple who may be willing and qualified to participate in this important research. Your participation is completely voluntary.

Compensation

For participating in this study, you each will be compensated \$12.50 and in some classes, extra credit. If your professor offers credit for participating in this research, he/she will offer you other opportunities to earn extra credit.

Procedures and Participation

Participation includes involvement in an individual 1 hour semi-structured interview, during which you will be interviewed alone, at the BYU Comprehensive Clinic, located in the Taylor Building on 900 E. 1190 N. in Provo. After the interview, you may be sent a paper reviewing some of the team's interpretation of your statement to ensure that we accurately describe what you have explained to us. At this time you may read the paper and give us feedback if you desire (a twenty minute process is estimated, if you choose to participate in this portion). We may also call you after the interview to clarify something you said or ask about a concept. Such a call would last between 5 and 10 minutes. All interviews and phone calls will be complete by April, 2005. By participating, you will be talking with Natalie Stevens about relationships between virtues, values, and general marital intimacy.

Participation in this research study is voluntary. You have the right to withdraw at anytime or refuse to participate entirely without jeopardy to your class status, grade or standing with the university.

Risks/Benefits

There are minimal risks for participation in this study. There is the potential for discomfort associated with providing information about your relationship, views, and yourself. While there are no known benefits to you for participating in this study, society and people in general will likely benefit from the knowledge gained regarding values and marital intimacy.

The results of this research may specifically help couples working towards achieving greater intimacy and therapists helping clients to do this. As this study is completed, the conclusions and benefits will be released to the public in hopes of providing assistance for all couples, therapists, researchers, and educators in the area of Marriage and Family Therapy.

Appendix F

Demographic Questionnaire

To begin, we have a few general questions about you:

1. What is your gender?
 - a. female
 - b. male

2. What is your age?
 - a. 18-25
 - b. 26-35
 - c. 36-45
 - d. 46-55
 - e. 56 or above

3. What is your relationship status?
 - a. Single
 - b. Married
 - c. Separated
 - d. Divorced
 - e. Other _____ (please specify)

4. How many times have you been married? _____

5. How many years have you been in your current relationship? _____
 - b. How many years have you been married to your current spouse?

6. How many children do you have?
 - a. 0
 - b. 1-2
 - c. 3-4
 - d. 5-6
 - e. 7 or more

7. What is your religious affiliation?
 - a. Buddhist/Hindu
 - b. Christian

- c. Islamic
- d. Jewish
- e. Other: _____

8. What is the highest level of education you have completed?

- a. junior high school
- b. high school
- c. some college
- d. college
- e. graduate degree

9. What is your annual income?

- a. 0-14,999
- b. 15,000-29,999
- c. 30,000-44,999
- d. 45,000-59,999
- e. 60,000 or above

10. What is your race/ethnicity?

- a. White/Caucasian
- b. African American
- c. Asian/
- d. Pacific Islander
- e. Hispanic
- f. Other (specify): _____

Appendix G

Original Interview Protocol: How virtues and values affect marital intimacy

1. What do you see as the purpose of marriage?
 - a. How successful do you think your marriage is in fulfilling this purpose?
 - b. What do you think would make it more successful?
2. How important is it for you to feel close to your spouse? What else is important in your marriage?
3. What are some of the big issues in your marriage? Things that have been difficult for you to deal with as a couple?
4. What makes you feel close to your partner?
 - a. What gets in the way of feeling close to each other?
5. Different ways that you might feel close with each other are: physically, emotionally, sexual intimacy, talking about our thoughts, sharing activities
 - a. Which type of closeness is the most important to you? To your partner?
Does your partner know the type of intimacy most important to you?
6. What happens in your marriage when you do not feel close to your spouse?
 - a. How much does it affect you? And how does it affect you?
 - i. How do you deal with this distance?
 - b. What is good about how you deal with the distance? What is bad about it?
7. What values or personal qualities are important to you in marriage?
8. How important do you think personal qualities like honesty and generosity are in feeling close in your marriage? In the overall purpose of your marriage?
 - a. How do these things influence how close you feel?
 - b. How can they help you feel closer when you have felt distant?
9. Which of these qualities is the most difficult for you to do?
 - a. Why do you think this quality so difficult for you?
 - b. When did this become difficult?
 - c. Does marriage seem to have influenced how difficult it is?
10. What are some things that make it easier to be honest, generous, etc.?
 - a. What are some things that make it more difficult to exercise these qualities?
11. *How satisfied are you in your relationship?
 - a. What do you wish could be different?
 - b. Do you feel close? Are you satisfied with how close you are?
 - c. What would make you feel closer?
 - d. On a scale of 1-10, how happy are you in your marriage?

Appendix H

Revised Interview Protocol: How virtues and values affect marital intimacy

Purpose of the study: The endeavor of the study is to discover how values and virtues affect marital intimacy.

1. What do you see as the purpose of your marriage?
2. How important is it for you to feel close to your spouse?
 - e. What else is important in your marriage? How does closeness compare to these things? More or less important?
3. What makes you feel close to your partner?
4. What are some of the big issues in your marriage, things that have been difficult for you to deal with in your relationship?
 - f. How do these issues make you feel distant (why feel distant)?
 - g. What happens in your marriage when you do not feel close to each other?
 - i. How much does distance affect you? And how does it affect you?
 - ii. How does it affect your spouse?
 - h. How do you deal with your sadness/frustration resulting from distance (how do you distract yourself from feelings resulting from the distance)?
 - i. In the questionnaire, you rated some other things that are important in your marriage. How does remembering these other things help you deal with times that you don't feel close to spouse?
5. From your questionnaire, you marked some things important to you in marriage. How important do you think personal qualities (virtues) like honesty and generosity are in feeling close in your marriage?
6. What virtue is one of the toughest for you to live?
7. How does marriage affect your ability to be honest?
 - j. How does it make it harder? Easier?
 - k. When you have to work through a problem in your relationship to come closer, how important do virtues become?
8. Tell me about a time when your spouse exercising virtues drew you closer together?
 - i. What did his virtuous actions tell you about his love for you?
 - ii. How does feeling loved increase how close you feel to your spouse?
 - iii. How has his example helped you want to live virtues more?
1. Tell me about a time that living a virtue helped you feel closer to your spouse.
 - i. How does living a virtue [ex.: being kind] affect your love for your spouse?
 - ii. What message is sent by you acting kind (for example)?
- m. How does feeling close help you live virtues?
- n. How does feeling loved help you live virtues?
- o. How important do you think it is to be focused on your spouse and making her feel happy?

9. Tell me about a time when nothing seemed to help you and your spouse come close. Why was it that nothing was helping? What eventually happened?
10. Tell me about a time when you were not willing or able to live a virtue? Why was it so hard to forgive at this time?
11. On a scale of 1-10, 10 being very good, how good do you think you are at living virtues? Your spouse?
12. Do you feel close to your spouse? Are you satisfied with how close you are?
 - p. On a scale of 1-10, how close are you in your marriage?
 - q. What would make you feel closer?
13. What would you say is a good rule of them for how you should treat each other in marriage?
14. And how does this rule make you feel closer to your spouse when you live it? When she lives it?