

THE USO PRESENTS



A MONTHLY SERIES FOR MILITARY FAMILIES

You're Leaving... Again?

WITH MATT & CORIE WEATHERS



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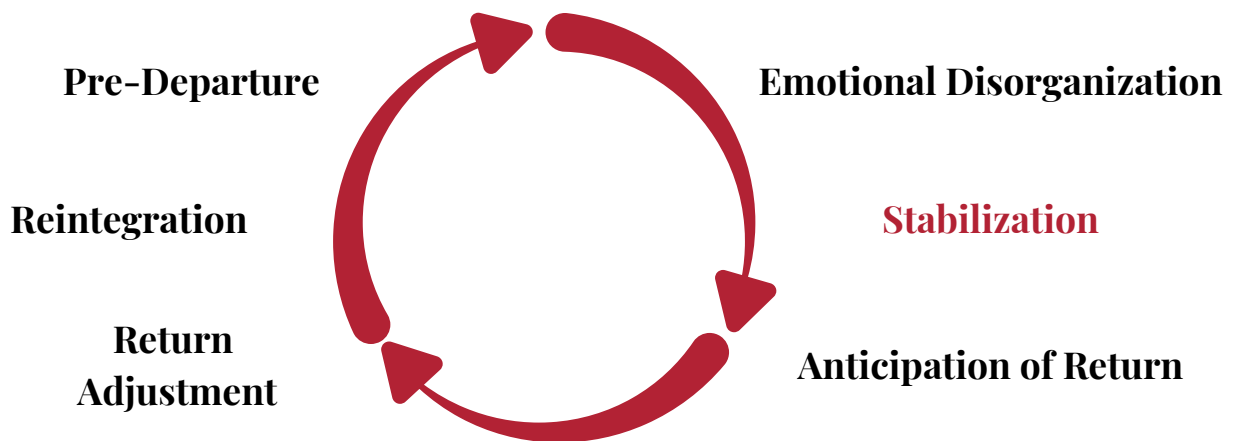
INTIMACY WHILE APART
MATT & CORIE WEATHERS

Spending any time apart as a family can be difficult, but as a military family that happens more often than you would like. In fact, many military families spend almost half of their married time apart.

How do you keep a marriage and family strong despite the distance?

This series aims to answer that question. We believe that your relationship can not only stay connected, but it can actually grow and deepen even when you are apart. Whether you are going through a deployment, TDY, unaccompanied tour, temporary geo-batching situation, or other extended separation, this series is for you.

SEPARATION CYCLE- Finding a new pattern while living apart.
Detachment



INTIMACY- "IN-TO-ME-SEE"

"In true love the smallest distance is too great and the greatest distance can be bridged."
'Hans Nouwens



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WHAT IS INTIMACY?

At its most basic, intimacy is a **noun**. It is a closeness, a connection, or a feeling of familiarity between you and another person. It is a vulnerable 'state' where one feels exposed but is secure and safe with the other person. In the context of marriage, however, it is often thought of in the context of the physical/sexual experience of a couple.

There are actually many kinds of intimacy, but we will start with the most obvious...

PHYSICAL/SEXUAL INTIMACY

"Our body wonderfully combines hormones, blood vessels, nerves, and skin to create attraction and desire. Our soul involves our mind and imagination, our will and our choice, our heart and our emotions. Our spirit gives us true love and creates an ability to become [one]"~ Dr. Doug Rosena

It is actually "normal" for an active duty military couple to feel like they have spent an equal amount of time together and apart. This can make connecting sexually especially challenging and create strain on the relationship. Here are a few tips to keep in mind:

1. Oxytocin- A hormone released during climax is often called the "_____". It is the same hormone that is released when a mother nurses her baby or when we look into each others' eyes. It is an important part of helping a couple feel connected and build that bond.
2. "Skin _____" Is a feeling of your skin crawling or tingling when you have not had a safe affectionate hug or physical intimacy with your spouse for a long period of time.
3. Women tend to crave sex _____ with each day that passes without physical intimacy, while men crave it _____. (This is based on research of the majority, there are some that will experience it differently. Communicate with your spouse!).
4. _____ is not recommended while couples are apart. It creates habits and bonds (through oxytocin) that are not affirming or beneficial to the physical and emotional intimacy in your marriage.
5. Physical intimacy is as much about self-_____ as it is about knowing your spouse.
6. Affection is a _____ skill.



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INTIMACY MEANS SOMETHING DIFFERENT TO EVERYONE

There are actually many, many types of intimacy. Experts say there are between 5-40 different types of intimacy! Intimacy is often, and wrongly, equated solely with physical affection and sexuality. While these are expressions of intimacy, they are not the whole of it. Physical affection and sexual behavior are the easiest form of intimacy to gauge connectivity because they are behaviors that requires BOTH spouses to be vulnerable in an obvious way. However, below are a few more to think about. Use the following types listed below as a discussion starter with your spouse. Which ones stand out to you as important or necessary for you to feel safe, vulnerable, and connected?

- | | |
|-------------------|---|
| • FINANCIAL | • PARENTING |
| • EMOTIONAL | • GOAL SETTING |
| • SEXUAL/PHYSICAL | • TIME INTIMACY- TIME TOGETHER |
| • WORK INTIMACY | • SPIRITUAL |
| • INTELLECTUAL | • PAST EXPERIENCES (SHARING YOUR PAST TOGETHER) |
| • RECREATIONAL | |
| • ----- | • ----- |
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BUILDING INTIMACY (ESPECIALLY WHEN APART)

Building and creating intimacy in your relationship will always be important. This means that you will never "arrive" but will always work hard to keep growing. Keep it a constant *positive* and *safe* conversation in your marriage. Here are four things that are required for building intimacy:

- Emotional vulnerability & security
- Knowledge of self & the other
- A courageous & adventurous spirit
- An open-hearted selflessness



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QUESTIONS TO HELP YOU GET STARTED

1. Which of the intimacy types stood out to you as important in your relationship?

2. What story or experience from your past solidified that need for you? (i.e. Did you come from an affectionate family? Did you grow up with financial hardship?)

3. In what ways are your intimacy types similar to your spouse's? Do they impact each other when they are fulfilled or not fulfilled?

4. In what ways could you lean towards your spouse's intimacy type to show them you respect and value how they receive love?

"The foundation of intimacy is a desire to experience acceptance and connection when we are in our most vulnerable state of being." ~ Matt Weathers

There are multiple expressions and levels of intimacy, both verbal and nonverbal, that affirm a connection. It can be an emotional and spiritual experience (which does not have to be in a religious sense). Intimacy should not **only** focus on how to have a better sex life. That is simply a benefit and reward for practicing **intimacy-promoting behaviors, with right motives, in all areas of the marriage.**



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RESOURCES MENTIONED:

USO PROGRAMS:

Bob Hope Legacy Reading Program

Coffee Connection

Discovering Your Spark, Brittany Boccher

RESOURCES :

"The Lifegiver 5 Minute Check-in@" www.life-giver.org

Day One Journal App <https://dayoneapp.com/>

Esther Perel: Mating in Captivity

Better Love Assessment

Building Intimate Marriages

PODCAST EPISODES:

Sexual Intimacy and Post-Affair with Dr. Mike

Building Intimate Marriages

Smartfamily Podcast on staying intimate after kids

COUNSELING:

The Lifegiver Directory: (Military spouse, veteran, or culturally competent clinicians)

Lifegiver: Breathe life into your service family www.life-giver.org

Military OneSource

OTHER RECOMMENDED RESOURCES:

Sacred Spaces: My Journey to the Heart of Military Marriage (Corie Weathers)

Authentic Intimacy- Dr. Julie Slatterly

Lifegiver Podcast with Corie Weathers



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PROTECTING YOUR MARRIAGE

Protecting your marriage takes intentionality, work, and incredible boundaries. Affairs can happen to anyone, and don't often start with the affair in mind. They begin with believing small lies about you, your spouse, or your marriage. If you have trouble finding them, they usually revolve around you and a disconnection within your marriage. They may sound like, "Another man will make me happy" or "I deserve to be happy." Chances are, if you are human, you have been tempted by one of these thoughts.

HERE ARE THE 12 STEPS TO AN AFFAIR:

The first three steps leading to an affair are experienced by most people so if you want to affair-proof your marriage, you must be aware from step one.

1. **Something difficult happens that causes tension within you**– an argument with your spouse, deployment, loss, or worse.
2. **You find yourself aware of another person and think he is attractive.** This is normal! Yet, you are tempted to wonder what married life would be like with him, tempted to be closer friends, or jealous of his/her marriage.
3. **Innocent meetings (perhaps unplanned) happen and flirting occurs.** Perhaps a joke is told and he laughs when no one has laughed at that joke in years! It feels good, and you notice.
4. **Meetings become intentional.** Perhaps you know he is in Starbucks every morning at 8:30 or he's in the office at a specific time– so you make effort to be there.
5. **While in a group setting, the two linger together in conversation.** You find yourself wanting to have purposeful conversation with him more than anyone else.
6. **Conversation begins to shift to feelings.** This is where things really start to slip. Discussions begin about how you feel including personal details, struggles you have, stress, etc. Sharing feelings leads to the building of intimacy. Women must be especially careful because sharing feelings comes so naturally.
7. **Intentional meetings occur under the guise of a legitimate purpose because you really want to talk about more feelings.**
8. **An isolated meeting happens for pleasure.** This is where you can't account for your time or what you were doing without lying. You are making excuses out of fear that you will be found out for what may be an emotional affair.



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- 9. Embraces become affectionate and playful touching begins.** You are sold out and it is a matter of days or hours before the physical affair happens. You have turned away from your spouse and in your mind said, “I deserve this, need this, and want this.”
- 10. Embraces become passionate.**
- 11. Adultery happens.**
- 12. Affair becomes public.**

The truth is, an affair will cost more than you think! You will eventually have to face the public and your friends. It will destroy you, your spouse, and your family. Each step, you choose to believe the lie that someone else can make you happier or the truth that you could lose everything. If you find yourself moving towards someone else... run away. Most who are already at or past step 3 will struggle to find the strength to walk away. Remember, fulfillment and the “lover of your youth” is at home—nowhere else.

What captivates you? “Captivate” is an emotional word, a romantic word. Do you notice your spouse when they walk in the room? Allow him/her to captivate you again.

