



F.A.Q

1. Who comes to an Intimacy Retreat?

Believe it or not ... couples in all stages and phases of married life. We have young couples, couples who have been married a long time, those who are remarried, and all couples in between. Couples as young as in their 20's and as old as in their 70's. Probably the average couple is somewhere in their 40's or early 50's. People come from many different occupations - executives, business owners, clergy, a variety of professions and stay-at-home parents. What they all have in common is a deep commitment to their marriage and a desire to see it grow stronger and more passionately connected.

2. This seems like a pretty vulnerable thing ... why do people come?

What I hear most is, "We've lost our spark and we want to know if we can get it back?" The life we all live in urban America is incredibly stressful and demanding. Having time and knowing how to keep your relationship connected is challenging at best. Add to this that most of us did not grow up with great role models, don't see any in our media, and are taught some pretty unhelpful things about sex and relationship. We not only struggle with time but we struggle with knowing what to do to keep ourselves connected. The truth is, we could all learn to love each other better. And, with a little help and mindfulness, we can all experience an unlimited amount of love and passion through our sexual connection.

3. Being in a group and talking about sex sounds very uncomfortable. Do we have to talk if we don't want to?

No, you don't have to talk if you don't want to. We go to great lengths to make sure the retreat is as safe and comfortable as it can be. We realize that talking openly (or even hearing) about sexual health or loving intimacy isn't easy. This subject has been in the shadows and often feels like 'the unspeakable'. But one of the things we have learned from participants is the group becomes an important component. While you are not required to speak, people will be invited to offer their thoughts. As this happens, we all learn that we are not alone, that our concerns are often shared by others, and that others want to be deeply loved *and* are scared of the vulnerability, just as we are.

4. I am not a spring chicken anymore ... Is this retreat for me?

If you have medical problems or conditions effecting sexual function, this retreat will give you ways to deepen your connection and work with these limitations. In time, we all have challenges to our sexual lives and to intimacy. Whether it is an illness, fatigue, past trauma, unhelpful ideas, past disappointment, or just aging, we all experience sexual change. Learning to have a vital and deeply spiritual sexual bond is an art form that changes and adapts over time. But like a fine wine or a skilled jazz musician ... the beauty of time can actually enhance the experience ... if we know how to work with

our challenges. As a certified sex therapist and a medical family therapist, I have worked with many couples to discover how to work around these concerns by freeing their imagination and creativity to serve their loving connection.

5. I've read your materials mentioning the spiritual component coming from "Judeo/Christian mystic stories of sacred lovemaking" or "God's vision, love and desire for an eros of intimacy". What is the spiritual component of this retreat and what does it have to do with sexuality and intimacy?

Leo Tolstoy once said, *"The goal of our life is...to bring more love and truth into the world. We marry to assist each other in this process."* Our marriage is the inner sanctuary of our life where no one else comes but our spouse. Our partner becomes the foundation of our spiritual community. Marriage is the place where we enjoy life and perhaps raise children, but we also challenge and support each other to wake up and grow up. Marriage is an advanced practice of compassion and loving kindness in the face of conflict, dissatisfaction, fear and a heart that wants to close for fear of pain. To thrive in relationship we must let go of our need to dominate and be right. There is no place to hide - our partner reflects both our inner beauty and our growing edges. We are seen as they are seen ... and in both, we are given an invitation to extend grace and love to each other and to ourselves. Relationship is a spiritual process and our creator made it so. Searching both Hebrew scripture and mystic stories passed down through the ages as well as those from Eastern spiritual texts, we see the sacred potential in committed marriage was deeply understood. Practices were developed to strengthen commitment and provide skill to create lasting, loving and mutually satisfying relationships. This teaching has been lost to our modern world - but our desire for intimacy has not. In order to experience the wealth of blessing possible in marriage we need to learn again these great teachings and practices of the sacredness of intimacy.

6. What about if we are in couples therapy right now? Can this retreat help us?

All counseling, prior or current, that is helping you heal, clear baggage and restore your freedom to love yourself and love each other is great, and will complement this retreat. Couples who have been learning to communicate effectively will find themselves in a good place to begin to restore and expand their spiritual and sexual connection with the afternoon passion practices. Also, because of the intensive three day format the retreat offers a powerful experience that is hard for couples to replicate in a weekly therapy hour. Couples find the combination of the retreat and therapy very powerful in restoring intimacy.

7. What if we aren't having any big problems in our marriage or our sex life, but we are curious if we are missing out on something? Can this retreat be for us?

Absolutely!! Couples who are secure in their connection often get the most out of the retreat. The reality is that we can all learn to bring more intention, attention, presence and love to our touch and to our partner. Learning the art of sacred lovemaking with our beloved is a lifelong dance we adapt and perfect over time. We always have more to learn. This retreat will add another powerful experience to this learning process and add to the symphony you create together. Not to mention ... you will have a lot of fun!

8. What if I have questions? Can I talk with you ahead of time?

About a week or two before every retreat, the facilitators and I will call each couple to see if they have any questions and to learn about their hopes for the retreat. This gives us a chance to get to know you a bit, gives you a chance to ask us questions, as well as allows us to make sure that the retreat is well suited to meet your needs. These conversations are confidential and will not be referenced at the retreat. Questions are always welcomed.

9. What if we live in the same city the retreat is held? Can we stay at home instead of at the resort?

This is a great question. The entire retreat from the location, the rooms, the flow and material we cover ... even down to the food, is crafted to give you a completely integrated and holistic experience. We purposefully want to export you out of your daily life and give you 3 days to focus on the foundational relationship on which the rest of your life depends. It is important that you give yourself the opportunity to receive the full experience and let it have its full impact. You will be back in the chaos soon enough.

10. I find it hard to justify the expense of the retreat? What if it feels like too much of a financial stretch?

I deeply feel this question - especially in light of the financial strain on so many. The retreats are designed to both transport you to a beautiful safe place to revitalize your beloved relationship - and do this in the most efficient way

possible. While attention to detail is given priority we contract with resorts that offer us this experience at the lowest possible price. If a behind the scene corner can be cut without jeopardizing the experience, we do this. Participation in this intimacy intensive is a significant investment in your marriage. We make investments of time and money in many other places and many of those areas do not have the potential for nourishing or sustaining our happiness as this. After 20 years as a marriage and family therapist, I see far too many couples end a relationship that did not have to end if they had invested in their loving in real and practical ways along the way. By the time they come to my office - it is often too little, too late. One of the paradoxical realities of marriage is that it takes two to get into it and one to end it. Your marriage is an organic entity that needs ongoing deliberate care - or like a garden, it will get suffocated by all the weeds crowding in every day. The cost of a distant or conflicted marriage on you, your health, your job, your experience of stress, your quality of life and your children is beyond measure. The opposite is also true - a beloved relationship that is deeply connected physically, emotionally and spiritually, reinforces all forms of health, generosity of spirit, passion in life ... and for those who have children, becomes their source of security and model of life, marriage and happiness.

11. What if after the retreat, I want to follow-up or continue professional relationship work? Or what if our group wants to meet once a month to check in with one of the facilitators?

At most retreats I will have two other couple's therapists who help facilitate the retreat. They are available to meet with couples or with groups of couples in the months following the retreat, for those who would like to continue to check in about how they are applying these practices in their everyday life or who wish to attend more personally to an area of growth or healing.

For more information visit www.tinaschermersellers.com

or write retreat@tinaschermersellers.com

Register here - <http://www.surveymonkey.com/s/GSSRWebRegistration>

Tina Schermer Sellers is a licensed family therapist and certified sex therapist. A frequent speaker, nationally and internationally, she draws from 20 years of clinical and teaching experience to help craft relationships and lives that flourish. In recent years, Tina has done extensive study on the impact of culture and organized religion on sexual and spiritual health. In her trainings she uncovers discarded mystic Hebrew teaching revealing a sacred sexual ethic that illuminates the purpose and hope in God's gift of sexual desire and sexual communion. Tina has helped hundreds of couples heal broken relationships and discover a passionate intimacy they didn't know was possible.

