

Knead your love

BOEY PING PING explores how massage can put a spark back into mundane relationships.

BEYOND the basic foundation of every marriage – love, trust, communication and honesty – lies the importance of intimacy in a relationship.

"Intimacy doesn't just refer to sexual intimacy," Teoh Gaik Kin, a social worker who does pre-marital counselling says. "There are different levels of intimacy which are all equally important in building and maintaining a marriage."

These include:

- Physical intimacy – hugging and kissing
- Recreational intimacy – exercising together
- Emotional intimacy – talking and sharing at a deeper level
- Aesthetic intimacy – sharing a liking for similar hobbies
- Sexual intimacy – a healthy, sexual relationship.

Various forms of intimacy are important to prevent a marriage from going stale, says Teoh. Intimacy problems arise when couples do not know how to communicate and express feelings. "If this goes on frequently, the walls between a couple become thicker," Teoh says. "Couple classes and workshops help remind couples of their responsibility as husband and wife and learn new skills to adapt to changes in each other."

While conducting counselling sessions, Geraldine Tay, 57, who runs the Institute of Tao Studies in Taman Desa, found that many women experience intimacy problems with their husbands.

Tay devised a special massage combining Eastern massage (pain relieving), Western massage (relaxing) and Tao skills for them to perform on their husbands, and improve intimacy. Tay explains: "Women want their men to be successful. But when their men work hard, they might turn to massage parlours to relax. So, why not do the massage yourself?"

If time is short, Tay's massage can be performed in just 10 minutes, sitting up, with the clothes on, concentrating on the scalp, face or back. Tay claims her method is different from massages offered by beauty salons because the touch is different – sensuous, invisibly transmitting care and love to the person being massaged. She



says, "With the right technique, the simple touch of holding a man's hand can make a difference."

The technique uses minimal strength while maximising results so even small-sized ladies can perform them without feeling tired. The secret is in recognising the right meridians to stimulate.

The fingertip technique supposedly makes it harder for the masseuse to absorb or transmit negative chi to the person being massaged. Besides fingers, tools made from a special wood that emits infra-red rays is used to take away the blockage of invisible 'chi'.

The two-hour weekly class is a very private course where women are encouraged to talk about their personal problems, such as how to fulfil their husband's needs when they are heavily pregnant.

Besides practical work, understanding the theory and science behind the massage is important. For instance, certain meridian points affect the kidney which, in turn, affects the sex organs.

"The men love it. Many of them find it therapeutic and de-stressing," says Tay. "The objective of the massage is to reduce stress and energise the man to be physically healthy. Being a successful wife isn't just about dressing well and entertaining guests. Intimacy in the bedroom is just as important."

Footnote: Contact Teoh Gaik Kin at: 9287-7251. Geraldine Tay: 7983-0388

Massage for couples

Sembunyi Spa, Cyberview Lodge Resort & Spa

Mandara Spa, Prince Hotel & Residence

Oasis Beauty & Spa, Bangsar

Thalga Marine Spa, Mandarin Oriental